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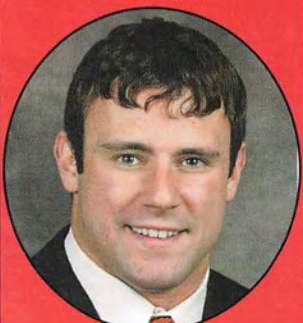
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Another week, another one-sided loss

FEATURING



BEN EISENHART

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Stormy Weather

1997 national championship team's appearance gets the crowd fired up, but then . . .



Brian Hill

RED BALLOONS floated skyward at odd moments — Oklahoma State touchdowns, Nebraska first downs — and seemingly in many directions. Of course, they are usually reserved for NU's first score and become one huge mass in the sky.

Many of the fans in the Homecoming crowd of 84,334 apparently couldn't wait until the Huskers finally got on the scoreboard on the first play of the fourth quarter. By then, it was 38-0, and the gray skies in between thunderstorms Friday and Saturday nights served as an ominous backdrop to a continuing nightmare.

After an embarrassing 41-6 loss at Missouri a week earlier, here was an opportunity to get things back on track. Pregame festivities concluded with Hall of Fame coach Tom Osborne and the 1997 national championship team coming out of the tunnel first to fire up the crowd, while also trying to fire up the current Huskers when they followed.

But it was another slow start. Nebraska went three and out and punted. Oklahoma State needed eight plays to take the lead. The Cowboys would score on their first six possessions. The 38 points in the first half were four shy of the opponent record for points in a first half set by Colorado in 2001 and were the most allowed in the first half of a home game.

For the second straight week, the offense couldn't get untracked, and the defensive woes continued. Even usually

reliable punter Dan Titchener shanked a 19-yard punt on his third effort of the first quarter.

The 45-14 result gave the Cowboys their first back-to-back victories over the Huskers since 1960 and 1961. OSU's win was just its second in 22 tries in Lincoln and first since 1960.

You can read more about this season of uncharted territory in this week's edition of *Huskers Illustrated*. Senior safety Ben Eisenhart is the subject of our feature story, and sophomore linebacker Phillip Dillard answers "10 Questions."

This week's issue includes a look at some of new ways coach John Cook finds to motivate the top-ranked NU volleyball team as it continues to roll through the Big 12. And we have an update on Doc Sadler's second NU basketball squad as it began practice.

It will be another difficult week for Callahan's football team as it prepares to play host to Texas A&M, a team with problems of its own coming off a 35-7 whipping at the hands of Big 12 South rival Texas Tech.

NU senior quarterback Sam Keller gave a passionate answer when asked where the Huskers go from here after another disappointing performance. "The only way to go is up," he said. "Any time you're faced with a little bit of adversity — in our case, a lot of adversity — the only way you can go is up."

"We're all going to stick our necks in there and go to work, go to work for ourselves, our teammates, go to work for the coaches, go to work for our school, go to work for the state because everything we do, this state feels it with us."

"I've never been a part of something like that. And I am right now. And I hurt. And I hurt for me. I hurt for my teammates because I want to do right by everybody. I want to do right for everybody who dies and breathes Nebraska." ■



ON THE COVER

A fan in the crowd of 84,334 can't believe what is taking place as Nebraska falls behind 38-0 at halftime en route to a 45-14 loss to Oklahoma State. Cover photo by Scott Bruhn.

Huskers Illustrated

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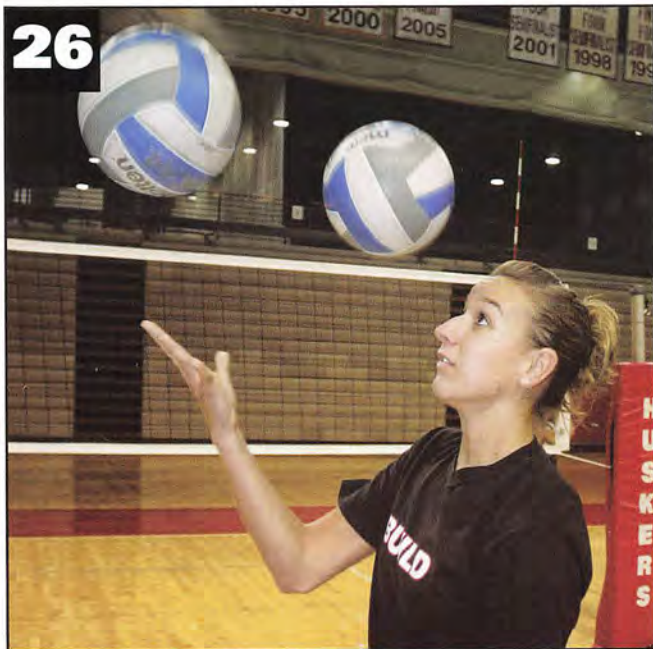
Ben Eisenhart's buddies on the Nebraska football team knew he wouldn't steer them wrong. If not for that, they probably wouldn't have accepted his invitation to spend the Fourth of July in his hometown of Culbertson, Neb. *By Mike Babcock*

NEXT ISSUE

The Texas A&M review/Texas preview edition will be mailed on Oct. 22. Check for updates at huskersillustrated.com.

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Hundreds Of Details

A successful road trip is one where everything runs smoothly



Terry DOUGLASS

WHEN NEBRASKA IS FORCED to leave the friendly confines of Memorial Stadium and take to the road, the difficulties stem much further for the Cornhuskers than just having to play in an unfamiliar and possibly hostile environment.

First, there are massive travel plans to make. Lodging and travel accommodations as well as meals have to be arranged for between 150-170 people months in advance. Visiting game sites must be scouted, so that coaches and equipment staff have an idea of what the facilities look like and a game-day setup can be arranged.

In all, there are hundreds of details — both major and minute — that need to be taken care of so that things can run smoothly and Nebraska can have its best possible chance at a successful road trip.

That's where Tim Cassidy comes in. As the Cornhuskers' Associate Athletic Director for football, the 49-year-old Omaha native is widely considered one of the top football administrators in the country, with 26 years of experience in the college game as a coach, recruiting coordinator and in his current position of football AD that he held previously at Texas A&M before coming to Nebraska in 2004.

In addition to working with head coach Bill Callahan in various capacities, Cassidy coordinates travel plans for the Huskers.

"I approach the travel portion of it just like Coach Callahan would approach the actual game," Cassidy said. "We have a checklist that we go through that you could probably call our game plan that covers everything from team security when we go to a movie to the exact distance between the airport and the stadium."

While Nebraska has a fairly established itinerary when traveling to play Big 12 Conference schools, Cassidy essentially has to start from scratch when the Huskers make once-a-generation trips to places like Winston-Salem, N.C., to play Wake Forest. In those cases, Cassidy contacts his peers in the business for suggestions.

"There's kind of a little bit of a fraternity or network of guys that are football operations people that share information, just like I would if people called and asked me," Cassidy said. "In most cases, you get a lot of cooperation with visiting teams, and Nebraska also has a great record for being a good host, mainly because of the events people here."

A bulk of the arrangements Cassidy makes must be taken care of well in advance of the game. As of last spring, he had already booked all of Nebraska's team hotels for the 2008 season. The first week of January, bids will be sent out to companies who could potentially transport the Huskers to next season's road games.

The cost of getting the Nebraska football team to and from a road game is significant. For example, Cassidy said the cost of

chartering a jet ranges from \$65,000 to go to Columbia, Mo., to \$95,000 for a game at Austin, Texas.

Then there's the matter of lodging and meals for Nebraska's travel party which arrives the day before each game. That group includes not only 70 or so football players, but also members of the cheer squad, Husker Radio Network employees, team doctors, trainers, coaches and administrative staff.

Obviously, road trips take a major bite out of the NU athletic department's travel budget.

"I think most people would just be shocked at the cost of the meals per individual," Cassidy said. "It ranges anywhere between \$40 to \$70 a plate to feed these guys. Typically, what they do with hotels is you might get a great rate coming into a nice Marriott for \$99 per night, but then you turn around and you're paying \$55 per dinner for your team and you're talking about feeding 100 guys."

"Any given weekend, we could spend up to \$30,000 on a Friday and Saturday for just meals and lodging, depending on what city you're going to. If you're going to Los Angeles to play USC, obviously, you've got to build in the extra cost there as opposed to going to Manhattan, Kan."

In his years of making travel plans, Cassidy has tried his best to take every possibility in account. For instance, he tries to steer clear of booking the team in a hotel that might be hosting a pep rally, alumni function or other similar distraction. However, he admits that sometimes you can't account for everything.

"We were once at a hotel during a bowl game where they had a cheerleaders' convention," Cassidy said. "It was a big, big hotel, but when you've got 130 football players in the same hotel as high school cheerleaders, that's not the best thing. That caused me a lot of gray hairs."

Besides coming out on the winning end on the scoreboard, Cassidy said a successful road trip is one where everything runs smoothly.

"If we've done a good job on the front end and there are no major catastrophes like a food shortage or bus problems or something like that, it usually goes OK," Cassidy said. "We usually send an advance person, who leaves on Thursday morning or Thursday afternoon and flies or drives to the site of the hotel, meets with their entire staff from the chef to the general manager to the sales to people to the person who's going to assign the keys, so they know our logistics even before we arrive to make sure everything's on track."

Cassidy and his staff get a two-thumbs-up review on their work from senior tackle Carl Nicks.

"They always do a good job of getting us there early and getting us in a good routine," Nicks said. "Of course, it's a little hard traveling when you'd rather just be at home, but it they do a good job of making it better for us." ■



Tim Cassidy is in his fourth season as associate AD for football.

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Facing Adversity

Texas A&M players support coach during pivotal season



Curt McKEEVER

IT MAY HAVE BEEN the toughest ever two-week climb to the top of the Big 12 Conference's South Division.

First, Texas A&M had to fight off the negative vibes that resonated throughout its fan base following a dismal performance on national television at Miami.

Then, the Aggies had to ward off the firestorm that followed the discovery that their \$2 million-per-year coach was sending out a secret e-mail newsletter "VIP Connection" containing injury information and player assessments not available to the public. A small group of boosters paid \$1,200 annually to get the information, with the money going to operate Franchione's personal Web site.

Definitely not good P.R. for Franchione.

But here the Aggies were after the first Saturday in October, having rallied from a 17-0 halftime deficit to Oklahoma State to defeat the Cowboys and sit as the only 2-0 team in the South.

As quarterback Stephen McGee noted, "You have to come together and face adversity. Your character gets revealed in tough times."

It would appear, though, that A&M's character will be put through at least a 12-game test.

Why? Well, even though the only blemish on the Aggies' record during the season's first half was a 34-17 loss at Miami (a game they trailed 31-0 after three quarters), the last six games of the Big 12 schedule included matchups against Texas Tech, Nebraska, Oklahoma and Texas.

Since A&M won the Big 12 championship in 1998, its record against that quartet stood at 5-22.

That doesn't sit well with Aggie fans who were already steamed and ready to jump on the Fire Franchione bandwagon following the loss to the Hurricanes.

Although A&M showed no hangover from the Miami loss and blasted Baylor 34-10 — in the process possessing the ball 43 minutes, rolling up a season-high 552 yards, allowing just seven first downs and a season-low 254 yards — quarterback Stephen McGee's emotional postgame defense of Franchione drew more attention than anything the Aggies had accomplished on the field.

Along with McGee, offensive guard Kirk Elder, tailback Jorvorskie Lane and defensive end Chris Harrington made glowing comments about their coach, who Lane said had apologized to the team before the game for making a "stupid decision" in regard to the newsletter.

The publicity surrounding that situation, which caught athletic director Bill Byrne off guard and, no doubt, put him in a somewhat embarrassed position, heightened what was already a pivotal season for Franchione.

Brought in to turn the Aggies back into a top-20 program, his five-year record stood at just 29-24 after the outcome

against Baylor. That mark was worse than any of A&M's previous three coaches who'd been on the sidelines for that many games.

After the Baylor game, McGee called Franchione a great football coach and someone who's been like a father to him, through good times and bad.

"Our coach is our leader, and we're going to follow him to death," McGee said. "And I mean that. You can doubt us, or whatever. Win, lose or draw, he's our leader."

Franchione said he dealt with the scrutiny by focusing on his team and the Baylor game plan. He noted also that his players should play for each other rather than for him.

"I talked to the team and just told them that sometimes you do things that turn out just exactly opposite of what you think they should," Franchione said. "I apologized to them and felt really bad for all the distractions they've had to put up with."

The Aggies' entire team then showed its support for

Franchione by showing up at his press conference the following Tuesday. There, Franchione read a statement that he wasn't planning to step down, and on his way out shook hands with and hugged his team.

Franchione declined to say the game against Baylor might be a defining moment of his A&M days, but later said Byrne had given him a clear vote of confidence.

Meanwhile, the school began an internal investigation of Franchione's newsletter dealings, and the Aggies tried to get beyond the distraction.

Falling behind Oklahoma State like they did made that chore nearly impossible. A&M managed 132 yards of offense in the first half only because of a 48-yard desperation heave on the final play, and it also allowed the Cowboys to score on their final

three possessions.

But Lane played the lead role in a second-half surge by rushing for two touchdowns and producing the game-winner by taking a shovel pass 10 yards for his first TD reception.

After a roughing-the-punter penalty allowed A&M to retain possession with just under two minutes to play, Lane then ran for a first down to allow the Aggies to run out the clock.

"It was just Aggie Spirit. We always talk about being a 'Band of Brothers' and we stuck together," tailback Mike Goodson said. "It just showed anything can happen. We never hung our heads. Coach 'Fran' gave us a pep talk at halftime and we came out in the second half ready to play."

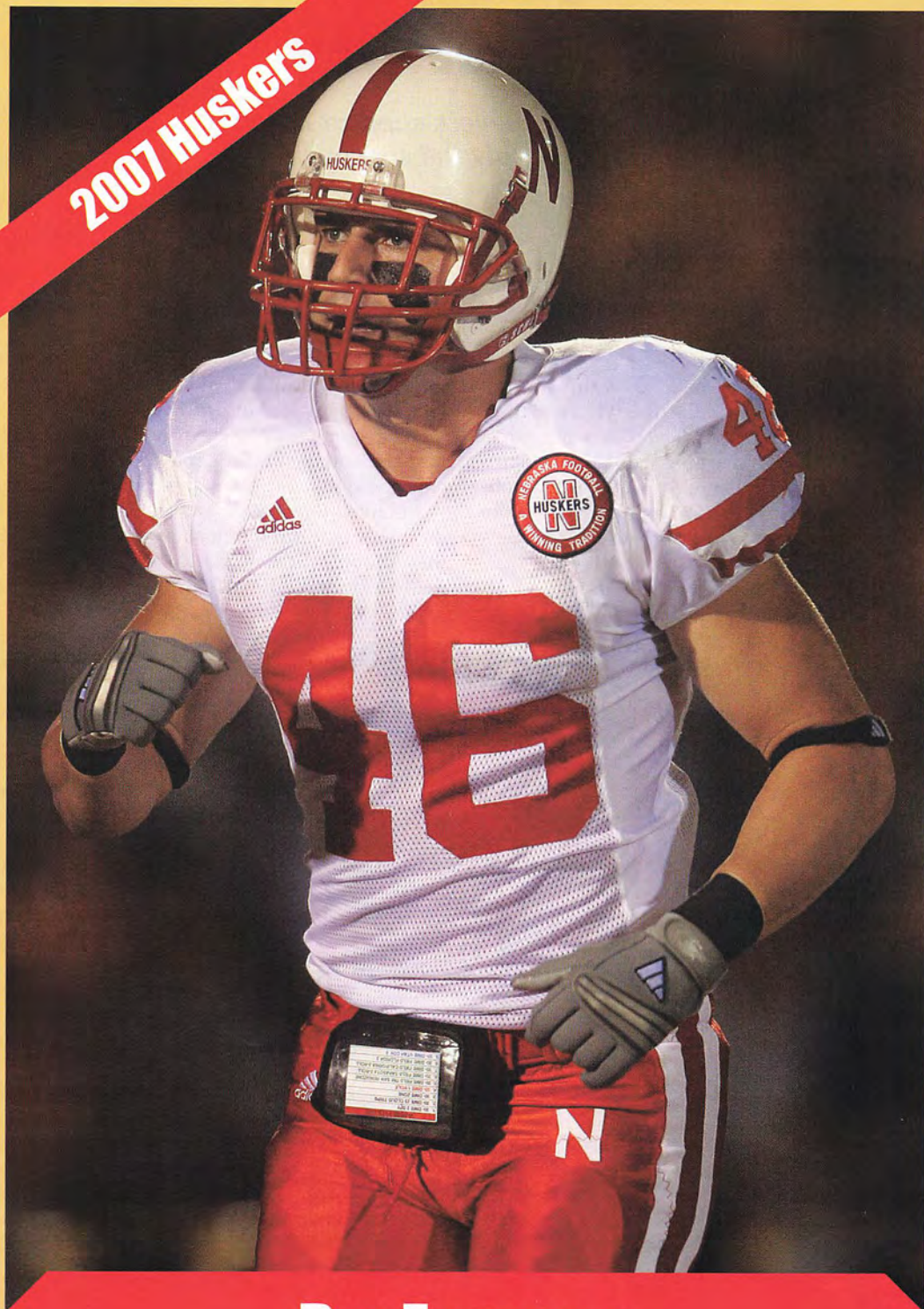
In all likelihood, Franchione's club will need every bit of that desire, and more, over the second half of the season. Otherwise, the attention it receives in the media just might be apt to focus more on unwanted melodramas than gritty performances. ■



Dennis Franchione is in his fifth year at Texas A&M.

Curt McKeever is a sportswriter for the Lincoln Journal Star. In addition to reporting on football, he is the primary beat writer for baseball. Curt can be reached at cmckeever@journalstar.com

2007 Huskers



BEN EISENHART
Safety

'I've Always Wanted To Be Something They Were Proud Of'

BY MIKE BABCOCK ● PHOTOS: SCOTT BRUHN

His buddies on the Nebraska football team knew he wouldn't steer them wrong. If not for that, they probably wouldn't have accepted his invitation to spend the Fourth of July in his hometown.

Ben Eisenhart assured them they would have a good time, though. And they did.

Eisenhart was born and raised in Culbertson, a community of about 600 (594 according to the 2000 census) in southwestern Nebraska. Well, actually, he was born in McCook, 10 miles east on Highway 6, which continues west and north through Palisade and Imperial and on into Colorado.

Highway 34 also carries traffic into Colorado, angling south outside of Culbertson and then west along the Nebraska-Kansas border. The Kansas border is about 15 miles straight south.

Geography aside, Eisenhart invited a few teammates to Culbertson's Fourth of July celebration, among them Corey McKeon and Sean Hill, both of whom are from suburban Chicago.

Hill is familiar with small Nebraska towns. His parents are from Falls City. But the experience was new to McKeon, who was impressed by what he found, according to Eisenhart. To him, Culbertson was like a small town on television or in the movies. "Is it always this way?" McKeon wanted to know.

Not exactly, Eisenhart said. The celebration had transformed it. The Fourth of July picnic and kids running through the park had created an image appropriate to a Norman Rockwell painting.

Insert a half-dozen college football players, and, well...

"It was kind of crazy for them," said Eisenhart. "They loved it."

☆☆☆

Spend a few minutes talking to Eisenhart about his

hometown, and it will be clear he loves it. When he walked on at Nebraska in the late summer of 2003, he felt a responsibility not only to Culbertson but also to the southwestern part of the state. Cornhusker football is important to the people there.

"I've always wanted to be something they were proud of," he said.

Folks in the surrounding area knew about Eisenhart long before he came to Nebraska. He played varsity football at Culbertson High School as a freshman. He was a linebacker on defense and an end on offense his first two seasons. Then he switched to tailback on offense as a junior.

His predecessor at tailback went on to play at Nebraska-Omaha, until a knee injury ended his career.

Eisenhart proved to be an outstanding tailback, earning Class D-2 All-State recognition twice.

He rushed for 2,336 yards his senior season. Oh yes, Culbertson played eight-man football, so the field was 80-yards long. "When you bust one, you're losing 20 yards," Eisenhart said.

He traversed that 80-yard field nearly six times in a first-round state playoff game his senior season, rushing for a record 445 yards and scoring seven touchdowns in a 76-44 victory against Banner County. The seven touchdowns tied a state playoff record. Culbertson lost in the second round.

Eisenhart intercepted 22 passes during his career and led the state in tackles for three consecutive seasons. Even so, he wasn't chosen to play in the Shrine Bowl All-Star Game.

He hasn't forgotten the snub. "I wasn't good enough, apparently," he said.

He was good enough to play in the Western Nebraska All-Star Game, however, and good enough to attract recruiting attention from the small schools in the state: Nebraska-Kearney, Nebraska-Omaha, Chadron State and Wayne State among them. Colorado State invited him to walk on.

For as long as he could remember, however, he wanted

FEATURING

BEN

EISENHART

"I've always had a knack for it. I've always been able to see the ball and see the path to get there."

— Ben Eisenhart (on his preference for defense)

to play football at Nebraska. All it was going to take was for Nebraska to invite him to walk on, and "I was going to come here," he said.

Had it not extended the invitation, he probably would have gone to Nebraska-Kearney, where, he was told, he could have played either offense or defense. "They acted the most interested," he said. "But I didn't want to go through my life wondering if I could play here or not. So that's why I picked this."

☆☆☆

Eisenhart's interest in football can be traced to an early age. He used to watch football on television and then go outside and kick a football in the park across the street from his house. He convinced his parents to mail-order football pads and played with a cousin, who was a year older.

At recess in elementary school, he played two-hand touch, though the games often got rougher. "I don't know what it was. I don't know if I'm more aggressive, but I just loved hitting," he said.

His first opportunity to play tackle football came in McCook during the summer of his fifth-grade year. He would play four years in the McCook youth leagues and make lots of friends.

"I practically grew up in McCook," said Eisenhart.

Some of those friends tried to persuade him to attend McCook High School.

"We'd be awesome," they assured him.

"You don't need my help," he said.

He was right. McCook advanced to the Class B playoffs all four years

he was in high school, winning the state championship his senior year. "They killed everybody," he said.

The Bison outscored their four playoff opponents 139-30.

Culbertson didn't win a state championship during his high school career. But it advanced to the playoffs each of his seasons. "We always had good teams," Eisenhart said. "I had fun."

He also had fun competing in basketball and track and field. He earned four letters in each sport, winning three Class D titles and two all-class gold medals in the long jump.

Football was his favorite sport, however, and defense was his preference. "I've always had a knack for it," he said. "I've always been able to see the ball and see the path to get there."

He's always enjoyed the contact, football's physicality, even as a running back. "I'd juke some guys, but if I saw a guy, I'd run right into him, just 'pop,'" said Eisenhart.

That aggression has earned him playing time at Nebraska on special teams. He's been a regular since his sophomore season, and he was put on scholarship at the start of training camp a year ago.

Coach Bill Callahan awarded scholarships to Brandon Rigoni and Andy Kadavy at the same time, announcing them in a team meeting. They earned a standing ovation.

Getting a scholarship "made you feel more like you belong," Eisenhart said.

But scholarship or not, "you're still part of the team. You're still playing," he said. "It's a great deal, especially for your family, not having to pay for



school. But it's not that big of a change."

☆☆☆

Eisenhart's grandfather, Russell Eisenhart Sr., played freshman football at Nebraska in 1942, before leaving the university to fight in World War II. His great uncle, Kerwin Eisenhart, earned a varsity letter that season as a fullback on the only Cornhusker team coached by Glenn Presnell.

Presnell also left after the season to fight in the war.

Ben's dad, Russell Jr., attended the University of Nebraska but didn't play football. Following graduation, however, he taught social studies at



In addition to being a backup safety, Ben Eisenhart has been a regular on special teams since his sophomore season.

Lexington (Neb.) High School and served as an assistant football coach for four seasons, two under Noel Martin and two under Barry Alvarez, both former Cornhuskers. His dad left teaching in order to work at the Culbertson Bank.

The bank was established by Ben's great-grandfather in 1886.

Even though he coached high school football, Ben's dad never tried to tell him how to play the game. "He's just always been supportive," Ben said. "He knows how things are. I remember in high school, he used to stand by himself because he didn't

want to talk to anybody, just watch. He was really into it, but I never came home from a game where he said I needed to do this or that."

Both of his parents have always been supportive, following him home and away in high school and now at Nebraska, never missing a game. "It's a great feeling, and I really appreciate it," he said.

"I just hope some day I can do the same thing for my kids."

His parents sit with the other parents at Memorial Stadium now, while others in his extended family use the season tickets for the seats from

which he watched the Cornhuskers growing up. He watched so many games from the seats in Section 38 that he can't remember them all.

He was at the 2001 Oklahoma game, when Mike Stuntz tossed the touchdown pass to Eric Crouch. He remembers that one. And he was at a few games in the 1990s that were so lopsided by halftime his dad would want to leave early to get started on the drive home to Culbertson. Sometimes, they would stop in Lexington, where his mom's parents live. Sometimes, they would drive straight through.

His affection for Cornhusker football was forged with a view from Section 38.

☆☆☆

Because of the demands of being a major college football player, he doesn't get back to Culbertson very often. But someday he would like to return on a Friday night to watch the Culbertson High Bears play football. That won't happen, though, because a year after he graduated, the school closed its doors.

Culbertson and rival Trenton merged school districts. Kids from those communities now attend Hitchcock County High, located in Trenton, about 10 miles west of Culbertson.

Originally, Stratton was part of the consolidation, too. Not so now.

Some kids from Culbertson transferred to McCook High School. Eisenhart's sister, who's now at Nebraska, did that for her senior year. Some transferred to Hayes Center.

"It's kind of hard," said Eisenhart. "We were a football town, because we were good and everybody was always there. We always did well in sports, had a big following. We played in the state (basketball) tournament one year and the whole town came (to Lincoln)."

School consolidation has become commonplace for small towns in Nebraska. And the process often lacks the pleasant nostalgia of a Norman Rockwell painting.

"We've always been proud of our high school," Eisenhart said. "It's kind of hard for them now to have that connection, really. Historically, we didn't get along with Trenton at all.

"We hated each other. But I think it's working out now." ■

10 QUESTIONS

with **PHILLIP DILLARD**

**Sophomore Linebacker
Tulsa, Okla.**

Phillip Dillard hasn't forgotten the play. And he won't. He was running down the field on a kickoff in last season's opener against Louisiana Tech and as he tried to plant and cut, he was pushed from behind. He even remembers the jersey number of the player who pushed him. It was 15.

Oh yes, and he remembers hearing a pop in the knee.

He was off to a good start in what would have been his sophomore season. He had four tackles. But he wouldn't play another down because of the ACL injury, indicated by the pop.

The experience was "extremely frustrating," he said.

He had to watch as his teammates played 13 more games. And he had to be patient in his rehabilitation. "In some cases, I can be patient," said Dillard.

This wasn't one of those cases, however.

Teammate Steve Octavien, who has dealt with his own injury problems, helped him get through the tough times, telling him he would come back stronger and faster.

"Everything will work out," Octavien told him.

But "I didn't think it was ever going to get better," Dillard said.

He was still a little hesitant at the start of spring practice, fearing he would re-injure the knee. By the Spring Game, however, such fear was gone.

If someone visited you in Tulsa, what would you show them?

"Man, I really don't know. I'd take them to the mall or something. There's stuff to do, but it's not really a place where tourists are going to come."

If your life were made into a movie, who would you pick to play your character?

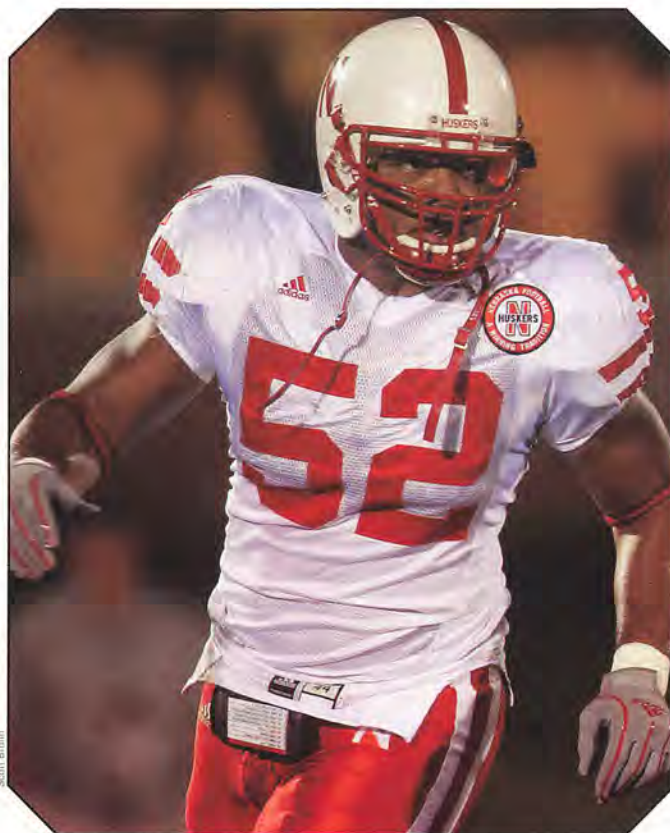
"Cuba Gooding Jr., probably because he's a real good actor and a lot of people say I look like him. Sometimes, they call me 'Radio.'"

What three things would you have to have on your MP3 player or iPod?

"I'd have to have, probably, 'Fresh Prince' episodes, R&B music and a little Hip-Hop music to get me hyped for the games. Sometimes I can listen to R&B and get hyped. R&B, probably Luther (Vandross), hip hop, I like Usher, Little Wayne or DMX. I've got to listen to music every day. Walking to class, I have my headphones. It's just something that relaxes me and takes my mind off everything."

If you could eat only one thing for the next month, what would it be?

"Steak, T-bone or roadhouse steak, I'm a steak guy. It would have to be very close to well-done. I can't have any red in there."



What do you miss most about home, other than family and friends?

"Just knowing everything, knowing everywhere to go, what to do and what not to do. The first month (here) I was bored. 'There's nothing to do.' But after a while I got adjusted. It's easy now. When I got here at the end of May, it was me, Marlon (Lucky), (Nick) Covey and (Craig) Roark. We'd sit there and be like, 'Man, I'm so bored.'"

What's your most embarrassing moment on a football field?

"I think it was the Ball State game, and I made a big hit on the running back. I tried to get up and celebrate and fell down. Everybody, all my teammates on the sideline, made fun of me. Cody (Glenn) came up to me and was like, 'Don't think I didn't see that.' I said it was part of the celebration."

When you cook for yourself, what's your specialty?

"I'd have to say steak, or Parmesan chicken. Secret recipe? I can't tell anybody that. I got it from my mom. I can make good fried chicken, too."

What's the best movie you've seen recently?

"'The Kingdom' was the best one I've seen lately, but I'm really looking forward to seeing 'American Gangster.' I probably have like 200 movies on DVD, but I go to the movies every week, no matter what, besides the team movie. I could be a movie critic. Some movies are just horrible, and I would like to say something. But I'm not making them."

If you could be successful in a sport other than football at the collegiate level, what would it be?

"Basketball or baseball . . . I'm not too good at throwing on the run but I can bat extremely well. And I like basketball. I was an inside guy, a rebounder, until my sophomore year in high school. Then I was more of a two or three, a shooter. I didn't play my senior year. I played a little bit my junior year, but I didn't want to risk anything for football."

What food would you absolutely not eat?

"There are a lot. Let me think of one. Chitterlings, they're disgusting. It was a long time ago I tried them. Then someone told me what they were, and it was really disgusting." ■

10 FROM TEXAS

(Nebraska has recruited well in Texas over the years. These 10 Texans earned All-America recognition playing for the Cornhuskers.)

- Kelvin Clark, OT (1976-77-78)
Odessa
- Keyuo Craver, DB (1998-99-00-01)
Harleton
- Doug Glaser, OT (1997-98-99)
Balch Springs
- Aaron Graham, C (1992-93-94-95)
Denton
- Travis Hill, OLB (1989-90-91-92)
Pearland
- Junior Miller, TE (1977-78-79)
Midland
- *Aaron Taylor, OG/C (1994-95-96-97)
Wichita Falls
- *Broderick Thomas, OLB (1985-86-87-88)
Houston
- Kenny Walker, DT (1989-90)
Crane
- *Jake Young, C (1986-87-88-89)
Midland
- *Two-time All-American

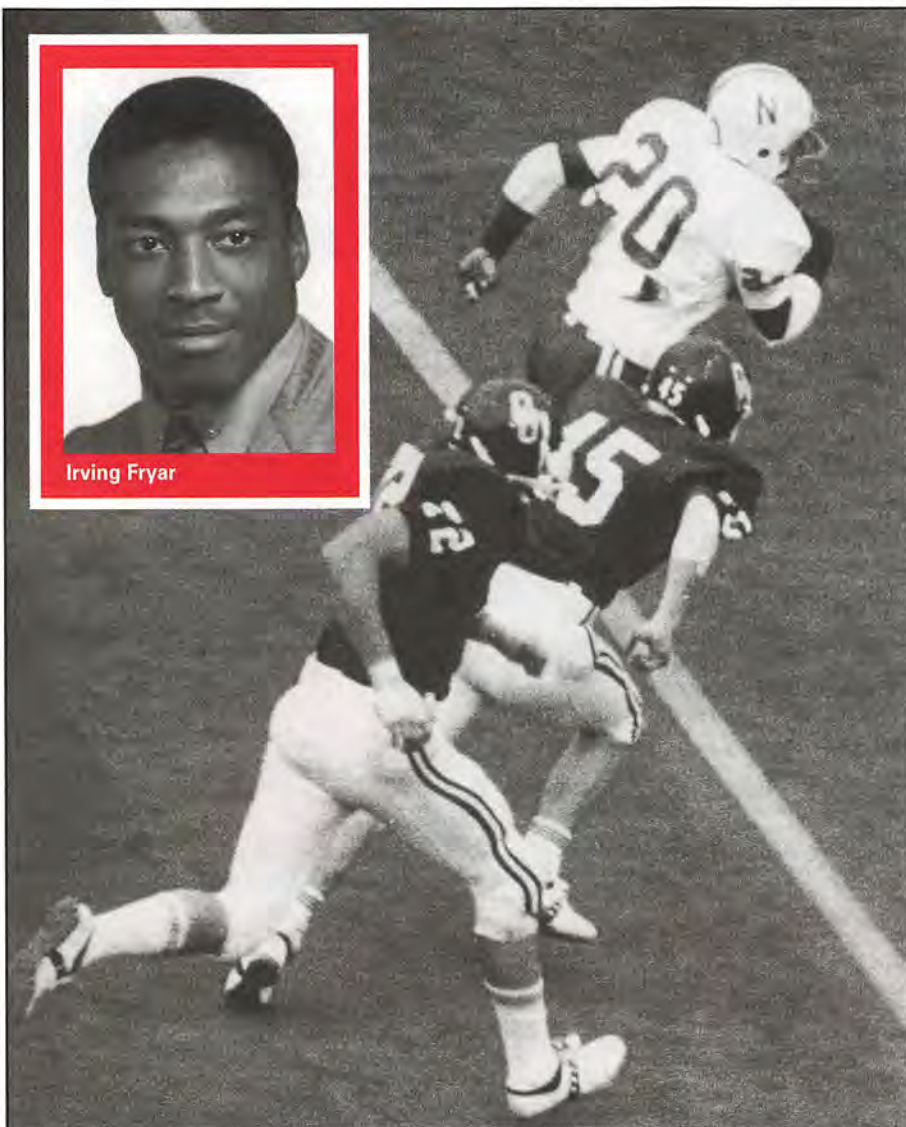
PLAYING THE AGGIES

(Nebraska and Texas A&M played each other long before the formation of the Big 12. The first game was played in 1930, D.X. Bible's second season as Nebraska's coach. Bible came to Nebraska from A&M. The Cornhuskers have dominated the series, winning 10 of 12 games.)

- | | |
|------|--------------------------------------|
| 1930 | Nebraska 13-0 (Lincoln) |
| 1955 | Texas A&M 27-0 (Lincoln) |
| 1969 | Nebraska 14-0 (Lincoln) |
| 1971 | Nebraska 34-7 (Lincoln) |
| 1972 | Nebraska 34-7 (Lincoln) |
| 1988 | Nebraska 23-14 (East Rutherford)* |
| 1997 | Nebraska 54-15 (San Antonio)** |
| 1998 | Texas A&M 28-21 (College Station) |
| 1999 | Nebraska 37-0 (Lincoln) |
| 2002 | Nebraska 38-31 (College Station) |
| 2003 | Nebraska 48-12 (Lincoln) |
| 2006 | Nebraska 28-27 (College Station) |

*Kickoff Classic

**Big 12 Championship



Irving Fryar

(Johnny Rodgers' career-receiving records, once seemingly unbreakable, are likely to fall in the not-too-distant future, under an assault facilitated by coach Bill Callahan's West Coast offense. This season, Huskers Illustrated takes a look at the all-time best receivers, as senior Terrence Nunn continues to climb on the all-time receptions list, topped by Rodgers.)

IRVING FRYAR (1981-83) No. 27 6-0, 200 Mount Holly, N.J.

Fryar, a wingback, was one-third of what Oklahoma coach Barry Switzer first called Nebraska's "triplets," joining I-back Mike Rozier and quarterback Turner Gill in the Scoring Explosion offense. Perhaps the best example of the explosiveness came in the third quarter of the Colorado game in 1983. Nebraska, which led 14-12 at halftime, scored 48 points during the third quarter, 41 of them in a 9-minute, 10-second span. The time of possession was just 2:55. Fryar initiated the explosion, scoring on a 54-yard run. He also teamed with Gill on a 34-yard touchdown pass in the 41-point burst. Fryar also had 253 all-purpose yards in an 84-13 victory at Minnesota that season. He rushed for 92 yards. He caught two passes, both for touchdowns, on plays of 68 and 70 yards. And he returned three punts for 23 yards. He finished his career with 1,196 receiving yards, second on Nebraska's all-time list behind Johnny Rodgers, and he earned consensus All-America recognition as a senior. He was the first Cornhusker ever to be the first pick in the NFL Draft; he was selected by the New England Patriots, with whom he began what would be a 17-season professional career. Nebraska's recruiting interest was a result of Frank Solich seeing him on film of another New Jersey athlete. He played several positions in high school, including tight end. ■

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Inside Help

NU targets interior line prospects on defense

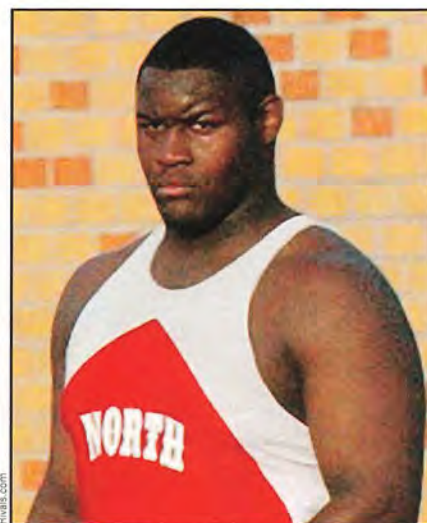
By Rick Shaw

Nobody said it would be easy to rebuild Nebraska's entire starting defensive front in 2007. But few could have imagined it

would be as challenging as it's proven to be in 2007.

The Huskers' starting front four has had difficulty applying pressure to the quarterback. In addition, at times, they've failed to be able to stuff the run. The lack of dominating play up front has contributed to some disappointing defensive outings in the first half of the season.

Head coach Bill Callahan and his staff are doing their best to ensure the future success of the Nebraska defensive line. The Huskers have targeted a number of high-profile interior defensive line prospects for their recruiting class of 2008. With one prospect already pledged and a number of oth-



Darius Parish committed in August.

NEBRASKA COMMITMENTS FOR 2008

| Player | Pos. | Ht. | Wt. | 40 | Hometown (School) |
|-------------------|------|------|-----|------|---|
| Will Compton | LB | 6-2 | 214 | 4.5 | Bonne Terre, Mo. (North County) |
| Sean Fisher | LB | 6-5 | 210 | 4.6 | Omaha, Neb. (Millard North) |
| Blaine Gabbert | QB | 6-4 | 226 | 4.65 | Ballwin, Mo. (Parkway West) |
| Bryce Givens | OL | 6-6 | 257 | 5.1 | Denver, Colo. (J.K. Mullen) |
| Jonas Gray | RB | 5-10 | 213 | 4.44 | Detroit, Mich. (Country Day) |
| Eric Harper | DE | 6-4 | 220 | 4.62 | Marrero La. (John Ehret) |
| Ricky Henry | OL | 6-4 | 300 | 5.2 | Omaha, Neb. (Burke/North Dakota State College of Science) |
| Tyson Hetzer | TE | 6-7 | 265 | 4.75 | Glendora, Calif. (Citrus CC) |
| Adrian Hilburn | WR | 6-2 | 190 | 4.4 | San Francisco, Calif. (City College of SF) |
| Dan Hoch | OL | 6-6 | 295 | 5.21 | Harlan, Iowa |
| Keelan Johnson | DB | 6-0 | 195 | 4.5 | Mesa, Ariz. |
| John Levorson | ATH | 6-4 | 185 | 4.55 | Crete, Neb. |
| Cameron Meredith | DE | 6-4 | 222 | 4.6 | Santa Ana, Calif. (Mater Dei) |
| Shaun Mohler | LB | 6-3 | 225 | 4.6 | Costa Mesa, Calif. (Orange Coast CC) |
| Collins Okafor | RB | 6-1 | 210 | 4.54 | Omaha, Neb. (Westside) |
| Darius Parish | DT | 6-3 | 325 | 5.08 | Wichita, Kan. |
| Kyler Reed | ATH | 6-3 | 204 | 4.5 | Overland Park, Kan. (St. Thomas Aquinas) |
| Riley Reiff | DE | 6-6 | 235 | 4.8 | Parkston, S.D. |
| Doug Rippey | LB | 6-2 | 218 | 4.6 | Columbus, Ohio (McKinley) |
| Baker Steinkuhler | OL | 6-6 | 290 | 4.88 | Lincoln, Neb. (Southwest) |
| Brandon Thompson | OL | 6-6 | 280 | 5.08 | The Woodlands, Texas |
| David Whitmore | DB | 6-2 | 190 | 4.5 | Port Arthur, Texas (Memorial) |
| Josh Williams | DE | 6-4 | 220 | 4.8 | Denton, Texas (Ryan) |
| D.J. Woods | WR | 6-0 | 169 | 4.35 | Strongsville, Ohio |

For more daily recruiting information, visit HuskersIllustrated.com, a member of the Rivals.com network.

ers showing interest, prospects are good that at least two or three defensive tackles will be part of this class when all of the ink is dry in February.

Darius Parish committed to Nebraska in early August. The 6-foot-3, 325-pound defensive tackle prospect from Wichita (Kan.) North will bring size, strength (340-pound bench press) and athleticism (5.0-second 40-yard dash) to the Husker defensive line.

Rated the No. 9 prospect in the state by Rivals.com, Parish racked up five sacks among his 35 tackles in his first five games this fall. He turned down scholarship offers from Kansas and Colorado State.

"I was talking with my uncle, and we had discussed it," Parish said. "He said 'who would pass up a scholarship offer from Nebraska?' so I wanted to get them a verbal commitment. They have a good football team that everybody knows about. They want you to succeed with academics as well."

Parish is scheduled to be in Lincoln on Oct. 20 to watch Nebraska take on Texas A&M.

Another top defensive tackle prospect scheduled to be in town that weekend is Justin Thompson. The 6-5, 280-pound athlete out of El Camino Community College in Los Angeles is one of the nation's most sought after junior college players.

Rated the No. 5 junior college prospect in the country by Rivals.com, Thompson boasts scholarship offers from a number of Division I schools, including California, LSU, Miami, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Oregon and Tennessee. The talented lineman is scheduled take one of his allotted official visit to Lincoln with heralded teammate, defensive end Simi Kuli.

"Coach (Buddy) Wyatt is a real cool dude," Thompson said. "He shows a hell of a lot of interest in me. My position is open too because they just lost a couple of guys on the defensive line."

"Probably out of all the schools recruiting me, I'd say Nebraska wants me more than anybody. I really want to get out there and see how things work out."

Thompson earned first-team all-California and first-team all-confer-

RECRUITING NOTES

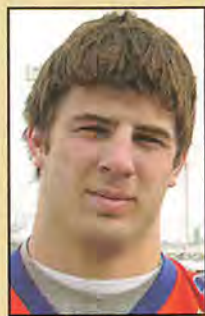
Defensive End Switches to NU

By Sean Stevens

This column has talked a lot recently about defensive end Riley Reiff (6-foot-6, 235 pounds, 4.8 40-yard dash) of Parkston, S.D. Reiff initially committed to Iowa head coach Kirk Ferentz in April, but in early September decided that he was unsure of his decision and wanted to look around a bit.

"I pulled the trigger too soon," Reiff told Rivals.com in September. "I was feeling a lot of pressure in April with all the phone calls and text messages and mail I was receiving, and I made a decision before I was ready. The only two teams I'm looking at are Iowa and Nebraska."

In the end, his familiarity with Lincoln and the proximity to his South Dakota home won out for the Huskers over the Hawkeyes.



Riley Reiff

"Yeah it kind of made it a big deal," Reiff said. "I've got quite a few family members that live close to the Lincoln area. During the summer, when I was working down there, I had a feeling that this was a place I'd want to spend the next four to five years of my life."

Reiff reminds some recruiting analysts of former Huskers Trev Alberts and Adam Carriker — guys who came to Lincoln a bit undersized as defensive ends but put in a lot of work in the weight room and became all-Americans. Reiff certainly sounds as if he has that type of work ethic.

"Hopefully, I can make an impact on the team and just be dependable," Reiff said. "I just want to always go 110 percent."

Reiff was the 23rd oral commitment for the Nebraska recruiting class of 2008. Just a few days later, offensive lineman Brandon Thompson (6-6, 280) of The Woodlands, Texas, made it 24.

☆☆☆

Three states are known to traditionally produce the most Division I prospects — California, Texas, and Florida. NU has done well in California and Texas over the years, and especially recently. Florida has been a bit more of a struggle.

The Huskers have two high school recruits and four junior college transfers from Florida on their roster. That pales in comparison to Texas (11 high school recruits) and California (10 high school and 6 JUCO transfers).

Nebraska's best chances to add players from Florida this year are cornerback Leonard Johnson (5-10, 177, 4.5) of Largo and safety John Lejiste (6-0, 176, 4.44) of Delray Beach.

Johnson has double-digit scholarship offers and has already visited Iowa State.

"I don't have any other visits scheduled yet, but I really want to get out and see both Nebraska and West Virginia," he said. "I'd like to take all five (visits), but I'll at least take a couple more before making a final decision."

He hopes to visit Lincoln for the Texas A&M game Oct. 20.

Lejiste has seen Wisconsin and plans to see Nebraska, but a date has not been set yet.

"I talk to Nebraska's defensive backs coach (Phil) Elmassian a lot," Lejiste said. "He's a great guy . . . really funny. He likes me mainly at cornerback but said he really likes the fact that I could play safety as well. Nebraska is a great program and a great school. I hope to visit there sometime before it's all said and done." ■

ence as a freshman at El Camino in 2006, compiling more than 50 tackles, five sacks, 25 quarterback hurries, a safety and a blocked field goal.

"I've never coached anyone as big and dominant as him," El Camino defensive line coach Tim Hyde said. "I would compare Justin to Jesse Mahelona, who played at Orange Coast and went to Tennessee. He is in the pros now."

Though not as heralded as Thompson, Quentin Toailoa is another talented defensive tackle prospect from the West Coast giving the Huskers a hard look. The 6-5, 275-pound lineman from East Valley in Redlands, Calif., will take his first official visit of the recruiting process to Lincoln on Oct. 19.

"To be honest with you, I don't know a lot about Nebraska," Toailoa said. "My mom really wants me to go out and visit them. She really likes their program and coach (Joe) Rudolph. He's my recruiting coach from Nebraska. He's real cool and easy to talk to."

Toailoa holds scholarship offers from San Diego State, Nevada, Arizona, Arizona State, Oregon,

Oregon State and UTEP, in addition to Nebraska. He earned first-team all-league honors in 2006 after compiling 70 total tackles and three sacks.

"I'm pretty good at staying low and getting off the line," Toailoa said. "I do a pretty good job of clogging up the middle."

Eddie Brown is a top defensive tackle prospect from Texas giving Nebraska a look. The 6-2, 266-pound athlete from Waller possesses a unique combination of strength (400-pound bench press) and speed (4.6).

"Eddie is a guy that you build around on defense," Waller coach Jim Phillips said. "He stands up for us on the edge, but in college he could be that nose guard like Casey Hampton of the Steelers. He's that good."

Rated the No. 94 prospect in the state by Rivals.com (three stars), Brown holds scholarship offers from Arkansas, Houston, Minnesota, Missouri, Ole Miss, Oklahoma State and Texas Tech, in addition to the Huskers.

Brown said he has yet to settle on a top group of schools but hopes to begin narrowing the field soon.

"They're all pretty even," Brown

said. "I just got an offer from Missouri, but I don't know much about them, and then there's the other schools that have offered me. I won't know anything until I take my official visits."

Lawrence Guy, a four-star defensive tackle out of Las Vegas Western is a prospect the Huskers still have a shot to lure to Lincoln for a visit. The 6-6, 265-pound lineman is rated the state's No. 1 player by Rivals.com and has offers from Oklahoma, Tennessee, Nebraska, Oregon, Michigan and Arizona State, among others.

"They (Nebraska) are still in the running," Guy's father Michael said. "It is in regions now. In the West, it is the Arizona schools and Oregon. In the Midwest, it is Oklahoma, Nebraska and Tennessee. We are trying to narrow it down."

Guy earned first-team all-state honors in 2006 after tallying 89 tackles and 15 sacks. He's rated the No. 10 defensive tackle prospect in the country. ■

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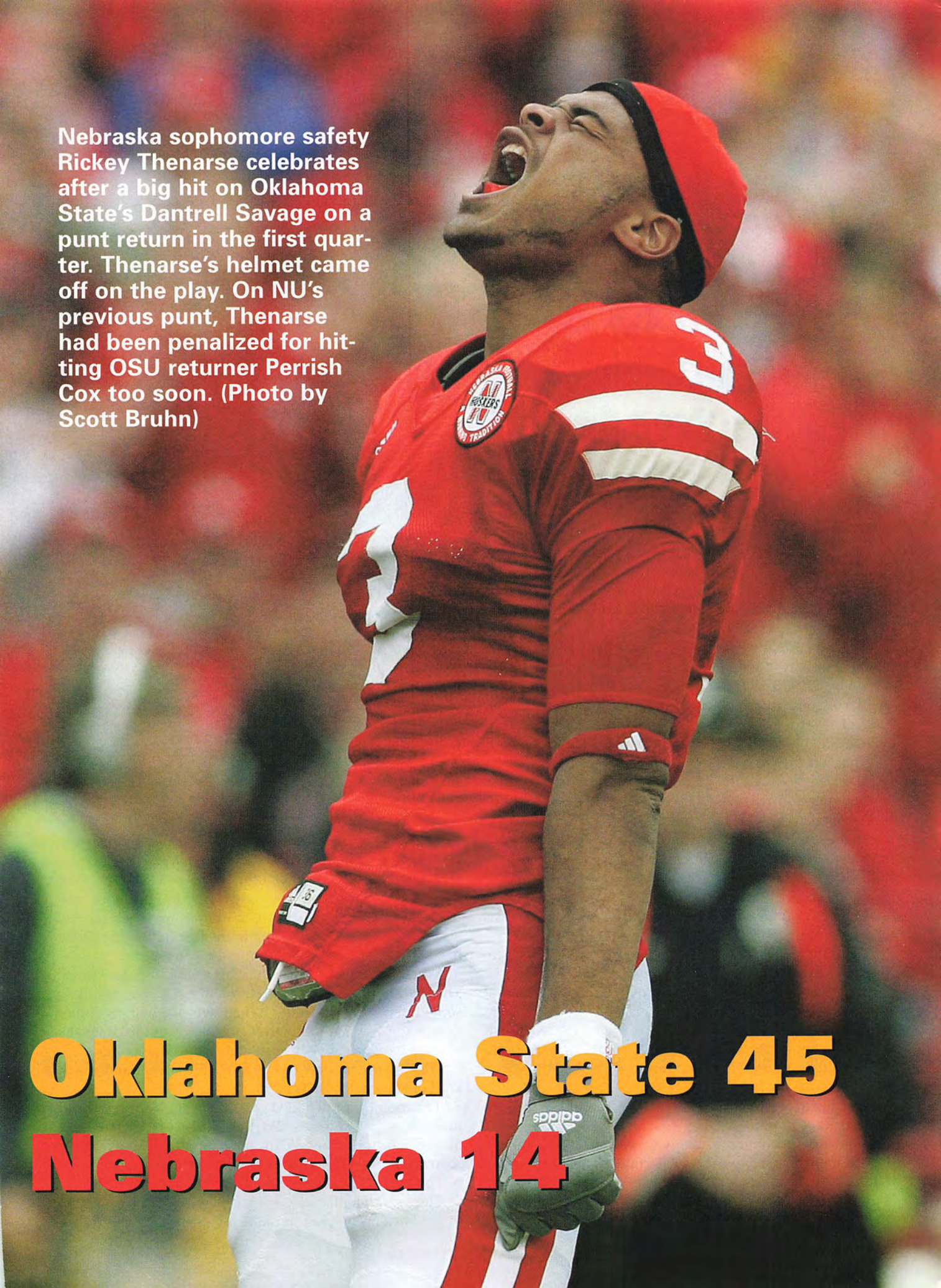


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Nebraska sophomore safety Rickey Thenarse celebrates after a big hit on Oklahoma State's Dantrell Savage on a punt return in the first quarter. Thenarse's helmet came off on the play. On NU's previous punt, Thenarse had been penalized for hitting OSU returner Perrish Cox too soon. (Photo by Scott Bruhn)

Oklahoma State 45
Nebraska 14

'It Just Kind of Sm

*Things get worse
after Huskers can't
convert on 4th down*

**By Mike Babcock
Photos: Scott Bruhn**

The play wasn't a turning point exactly, not with the score already 17-0 in favor of Oklahoma State. But Cowboys linebacker Rodrick Johnson called it a momentum shift, so that will have to do.

"After we stopped them on fourth down, the momentum swung back in our favor, and we just took off from there," Johnson said following Oklahoma State's 45-14 victory at Memorial Stadium.

The situation to which he referred was this.

Nebraska responded to the Cowboys' second touchdown by driving to the Oklahoma State 18-yard line early in the second quarter. On first down, Quentin Castille gained 1 yard. On second down, Marlon Lucky gained 7 yards. And on third down, Castille was tackled for no gain.

That left the Cornhuskers with fourth-and-2 at the 10-yard line.

The question was whether coach Bill Callahan would send in red-shirted freshman Alex Henery to kick a field goal for an almost-certain three points or attempt to get the first down.

Callahan opted for the latter, and Castille again was stopped for no gain.

Oklahoma State then drove 90 yards on six plays to increase the lead to 24-0. Before the half ended, the Cowboys added two more touchdowns for a 38-0 lead at the intermission.

"That first half was just horrible, really . . . the worst half I can ever remember playing," said senior linebacker and co-captain Bo Ruud. "That was just terrible. And there's no excuse for that."

Ruud spoke slowly, softly, trying to find words to express how he felt.

"I was disappointed in the way we started the game," he said. "We just have been starting games out really badly, and I think that's the biggest problem. When you start out bad, it's hard to build on anything, as happened today. Things went from bad to worse in a hurry."



Freshman I-back Quentin Castille rushed for a career-high 102 yards, but he was stopped for no gain on third- and fourth-down carries from the OSU 10 early in the second quarter.

TURNING POINT

The same thing happened the week before at Missouri, where the Cornhuskers fell behind 14-0 in the first 10 minutes and trailed 20-6 at halftime. The week before that, they trailed Iowa State 10-0 midway through the second quarter. And the week before that, they were behind Ball State 10-7 with 4:41 remaining in the first half. In fact, they have trailed in the second quarter in every game.

When that happens, players start trying to do too much. They "start pressing, and you think like, 'Oh, I've got to do something,'" Ruud said. "When we start doing other things, that's when more problems occur on top of what's already happening. So you're giving up some points . . .

"But then you start trying to do too much, and it just kind of snowballs on itself."

The points snowballed on Nebraska's beleaguered defense, to be sure, as did the yards. Oklahoma State gained 551, including 357 in the first half. The Cowboys scored only seven points in the second half, on a 30-yard run by Dantrell Savage with 5:25 remaining.

The second half, "we were just playing for pride, trying to get back and trying to make a comeback," said Ruud.

owballs'



"And there was a positive; we didn't quit.

"I think the second half we just decided, 'Hey, we're just going to do our job.'"

The Cornhusker coaches simplified things this week, according to receivers coach Ted Gilmore, who spoke at the Big Red Breakfast in Omaha on Friday morning before the game.

Nebraska didn't distinguish itself offensively early in the game, either. After failing to convert on the fourth down, the Cornhuskers turned over the ball on their next two possessions, with a fumble and an interception. They also were penalized four times for 50 yards in the first quarter.

"We had some opportunities early and we didn't capitalize," coach Bill Callahan said.

"They took the momentum, and it snowballed from there."

Even worse than the slow starts is the team's reaction to them, said Ruud. "Personally, I've been through a lot of games and I never feel panicked, I guess. I don't know, as a unit, we think... we've let the scoreboard affect what we're doing on the next play instead of just doing your job and just playing football.

"You're worried about doing something else instead of just executing." ■

REPORT CARD

RUSHING OFFENSE

Nebraska was more productive running the ball than in any game this season except the opener, when it gained 413 yards. The Cornhuskers rushed for 206 yards, including 122 in the second half with freshmen Quentin Castille and Roy Helu, Jr. carrying the load. By then, however, the outcome had been decided. "We did run the ball a little bit more by committee today," coach Bill Callahan said.

☆☆☆

PASSING OFFENSE

Nebraska's two touchdowns came on passes to J.B. Phillips and Thomas Lawson, but they were offset, to some extent, by two interceptions. Sam Keller's passing yard (129) was a season low, and he was sacked twice. Plus, those numbers had to be taken in context. Oklahoma State went into the game ranked last in the Big 12 in pass defense and next-to-last in pass efficiency defense. ☆☆

RUSHING DEFENSE

Dantrell Savage around and through the Cornhusker defense for 212 yards, as Oklahoma State averaged a whopping 6.2 yards per carry. No surprise, really. The Cowboys had rushed for 200 or more yards in their five previous games. Savage rushed for 148 yards in the first half, by the way. ☆

PASSING DEFENSE

Oklahoma State didn't have to pass much given its success running the ball. Even so, quarterback Zac Robinson was productive when he did, completing 12-of-19 with 234 yards. He wasn't intercepted, nor was he sacked. Not good. Adarius Bowman caught six passes for 100 yards. Also not good. The Cornhuskers did thwart an attempted halfback pass for a touchdown, however. ☆

SPECIAL TEAMS

Again Cortney Grixby was productive returning kickoffs. And again he had plenty of opportunity to do so, averaging 23 yards on seven returns. Also, freshman Adi Kunalic again was reliable on kickoffs, sending two of three into the end zone for touchbacks. ☆☆☆

NUMBERS

20

Oklahoma State had lost 20 consecutive games against Nebraska at Memorial Stadium, dating to 1960, when the Cowboys won the first meeting between the schools, 7-6. The victory was just their fifth ever against Nebraska. They won 41-29 at Stillwater last season.

NEBRASKA-OKLAHOMA ST. NOTES

OSBORNE SPEAKS

Even words from Hall of Fame coach Tom Osborne couldn't inspire the Cornhuskers sufficiently to shake out of the doldrums. Osborne spoke to the team on the Friday before the game. "He had a great message," said coach Bill Callahan, who declined to elaborate.

"I would leave that to him to talk to you because I can't speak for him in this regard, but he did a great job. He was excellent in front of our players, and he had a great message for them. I think it was just great for our team, to hear Coach and hear him speak, hear his message."

Osborne and members of his 1997 national championship team also held a 10th anniversary reunion on Friday and were honored before the game. "They're a great team, and they should be congratulated and celebrated," Callahan said. "They had one of the most unbelievable runs in college football history. It's just unfortunate that we couldn't celebrate with them today, and win in their honor. It was tough."

YOU DO THE MATH

Oklahoma State coach Mike Gundy told his team afterward that the victory was special because it was the Cowboys' first in Lincoln in 41 years. "But somebody told me it's been 47 (years)," said Gundy. "I guess once it gets past about 20, it all runs together. But this is a special win for the team."

When Oklahoma State last won at Memorial Stadium, Bill Jennings was Nebraska's coach. The Cowboys defeated a Jennings-coached team again in 1961 at Stillwater.

AT LAST, A PUNT

The first of Oklahoma State's punts came with 13:36 remaining in the third quarter. The Cowboys scored on their first six possessions, with the seventh ending as time ran out in the first half, when quarterback Zac Robinson took a knee. "I was kind of disappointed," Robinson said. "I saw we had a minute left and maybe two or three timeouts. I think maybe if we were on the 20-yard line, we would have gone for it, but with the lead we had, it was good. I wanted to play it, though."

The final series of the half began at the Oklahoma State 9-yard line, and the Cowboys were second-and-12 at that own 8 when Robinson took the knee.

NEAR PERFECTION

The Cowboys led 38-0 at halftime. "We played perfect football in the first half," linebacker Rodrick Johnson said. "No penalties, to my recollection."

Actually, Oklahoma State was penalized three times (for 25 yards) in the first half. The first half, to me, was perfection. We did exactly what the coaches asked us to do."

BRIEFLY

- Homecoming games aren't what they used to be, probably, but for what it's worth, the Homecoming loss was just the Cornhuskers' second in the past 39 years. They lost to Texas Tech 34-31 in 2005.

- The victory margin was Oklahoma State's largest-ever against the Cornhuskers and the 45 points were their most-ever. Their previous high point total was 42 in 1988 at Memorial Stadium. They lost that game, by the way, 63-42.

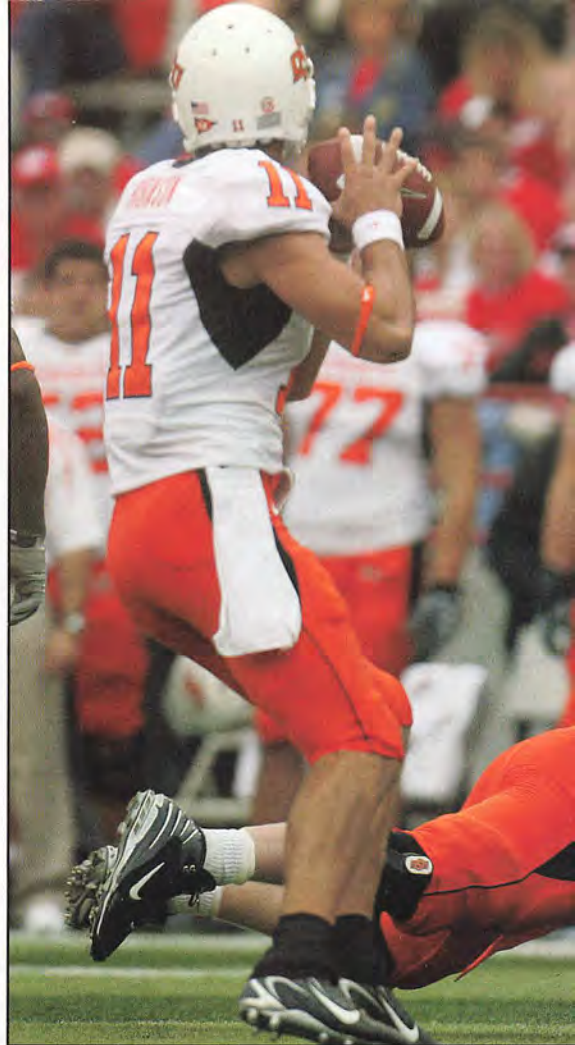
- Oklahoma State's 38 first-half points were the second-most ever in a first half against Nebraska. Colorado scored 42 in a 62-36 victory against the Cornhuskers at Boulder in 2001. The 38 points were the most ever in the first half against Nebraska at home.

- Thomas Lawson, the Cornhuskers' junior fullback, caught a 1-yard touchdown pass from Sam Keller in the fourth quarter. The reception was Lawson's third, and the other two went for touchdowns also.

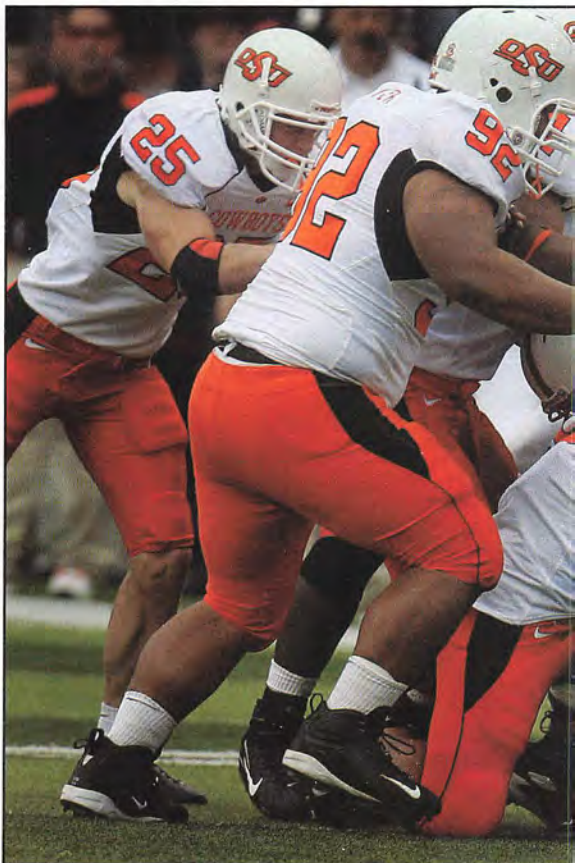
- Senior H-back/tight end J.B. Phillips also caught a touchdown pass from Keller in the fourth quarter. The catch was only the second of the season for Phillips, and the third touchdown catch of his career.

- Senior wide receiver Terrence Nunn caught four passes to increase his career total to 122, 21 shy of Johnny Rodgers' school record. Nunn didn't catch a pass the previous week at Missouri, ending his streak of consecutive games with at least one reception at 32.

- Junior wide receiver Nate Swift was a game captain, joining regular captains Bo Ruud, Brett Byford and Zack Bowman for the coin toss. ■



Nebraska defensive end Zach Potter (98) tries to get to Oklahoma State quarterback Zac Robinson (11).



NU freshman I-back Roy Helu (10) is gang-tackled by the Oklahoma State defense.



Oklahoma State quarterback Zac Robinson (11). NU did not record a sack.



OSU defense. Helu carried 14 times for 55 yards.

WHO STOOD OUT?

OFFENSE

Freshman Quentin Castille carried only once in the previous two games, after losing a fumble against Ball State. But he made the most of his opportunity against the Cowboys, carrying 20 times for 102 yards, the first 100-yard effort of his young career. Freshman Roy Helu Jr. also capitalized on an opportunity after not playing in four of the last five games, carrying 14 times for 55 yards. "We went in with a plan to feature them, so it was good to see that come to fruition," coach Bill Callahan said. "Castille's going to be a good player. Helu is a good player. They're complements to Marlon (Lucky), and we just wanted to feature those guys a little bit more."



Quentin Castille

DEFENSE

Senior middle linebacker Corey McKeon was second on the depth chart released on the Tuesday before the game, in a shake-up that saw senior defensive end Andy Poulosky, senior safety Bryan Wilson and junior defensive tackle Shukree Barfield all making the first starts of their career. Even though he didn't start — sophomore Phillip Dillard did — McKeon led the Cornhuskers with 10 tackles, including one for a 2-yard loss. The Cornhuskers finished with eight tackles for losses.



Corey McKeon

SPECIAL TEAMS

Sophomore safety Rickey Thenarse was assessed a 15-yard penalty for inferring with Oklahoma State's Perrish Cox, who was attempting to field Dan Titchener's first punt. But Thenarse wasn't early on Titchener's second punt, slamming into the Cowboys' Dantrelle Savage a split-second after Savage caught the ball. Thenarse made a lunge through a would-be blocker with such force that his helmet flew off. Such tackles have become Thenarse's special-teams signature.



Rickey Thenarse

INJURY REPORT

The Huskers didn't suffer any immediately apparent injuries that might affect a player's availability for the Texas A&M game, or at least none were identified afterward. Sophomore nose tackle Ndamukong Suh didn't start and missed the first quarter, though not because of injury. Suh apparently was suspended because of an altercation with teammate Victory Haines during practice. There was no official word about the altercation or suspension. Haines, a back-up offensive lineman, watched the game in street clothes. Suh entered the game in the second quarter.

GAME STATS

SCORING

Oct. 13, 2007
Memorial Stadium Lincoln, Neb.
Attendance 84,334

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | F |
|----------------|----|----|---|----|----|
| Oklahoma State | 17 | 21 | 0 | 7 | 45 |
| Nebraska | 0 | 0 | 0 | 14 | 14 |

First Quarter

| | OSU | NU |
|--|-----|----|
| OSU Crosslin 1-yard Run (Ricks Kick) 11:34 Drive: 8 plays 50 yds 2:17 | 7 | 0 |
| OSU Ricks 21-yard Field Goal 06:08 Drive: 9 plays 63 yds 3:15 | 10 | 0 |
| OSU Newton Pass from Robinson 41-yards (Ricks Kick) 04:06 Drive: 3 plays 55 yds 0:26 | 17 | 0 |

Second Quarter

| | OSU | NU |
|---|-----|----|
| OSU Hunter 33-yard Run (Ricks Kick) 10:39 Drive: 6 plays 90 yds 1:52 | 24 | 0 |
| OSU Crosslin 1-yard Run (Ricks Kick) 05:51 Drive: 8 plays 40 yds 3:20 | 31 | 0 |

| | OSU | NU |
|---|-----|----|
| OSU Robinson 3-yard Run (Ricks Kick) 01:54 Drive: 7 plays 58 yds 2:36 | 38 | 0 |

Fourth Quarter

| | OSU | NU |
|--|-----|----|
| NU Phillips Pass from Keller 13-yards (Henery Kick) 14:55 Drive: 9 plays 80 yds 3:34 | 38 | 7 |
| OSU Savage 30-yard Run (Bailey Kick) 05:25 Drive: 7 plays 51 yds 3:35 | 45 | 7 |
| NU Lawson Pass from Keller 1-yard (Henery Kick) 00:39 Drive: 11 plays 71 yds 4:37 | 45 | 14 |

TEAM STATS

| | OSU | NU |
|---------------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Total First Downs | 26 | 17 |
| Rushing | 16 | 8 |
| Passing | 10 | 7 |
| Penalty | 0 | 2 |
| Rushing Attempts | 51 | 50 |
| Yards Gained Rushing | 331 | 231 |
| Yards Lost Rushing | 14 | 25 |
| Net Yards Rushing | 317 | 206 |
| Net Yards Passing | 234 | 129 |
| Passes Attempted | 20 | 18 |
| Passes Completed | 12 | 10 |
| Had Intercepted | 0 | 2 |
| Percent Completion | 60.0% | 55.6% |
| Yards per Attempt | 11.7 | 7.2 |
| Yards per Completion | 19.5 | 12.9 |
| Total Offensive Plays | 71 | 68 |
| Total Net Yards | 551 | 335 |
| Avg. Gain Per Play | 7.8 | 4.9 |
| Fumbles: No-Lost | 0-0 | 3-1 |
| Penalties: No-Yards | 7-62 | 6-57 |
| Punts: No-Yards | 2-78 | 4-147 |
| Avg. Per Punt | 39.0 | 36.8 |
| Avg. Net Punt | 36.0 | 36.5 |
| Punt Returns: No-Yards | 2-1 | 1-6 |
| Kickoff Returns: No-Yards | 1-4 | 8-187 |
| Interception Returns: No-Yards | 2-0 | 0-0 |
| Fumble Returns: No-Yards | 0-0 | 0-0 |
| Miscellaneous Yards | 0 | 0 |
| Possession Time | 29:10 | 30:50 |
| Third-Down Conversions | 6-10 | 7-16 |
| Percentage | 60.0% | 43.8% |
| Fourth-Down Conversions | 0-0 | 1-3 |
| Percentage | 0.0% | 33.3% |
| Sacks By: No-Yards | 2-17 | 0-0 |



Hall of Fame coach Tom Osborne (left) and longtime defensive coordinator Charlie McBride were among those on hand as the 1997 national championship team was honored.

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

OKLAHOMA STATE

| | No | Gain | Lost | Net | Avg | TD | Lg |
|--------------|-----------|------------|-----------|------------|------------|----------|-----------|
| Savage | 25 | 216 | 4 | 212 | 8.5 | 1 | 30 |
| Hunter | 10 | 71 | 4 | 67 | 6.7 | 1 | 33 |
| Robinson | 9 | 37 | 4 | 33 | 3.7 | 1 | 17 |
| Crosslin | 4 | 4 | 0 | 4 | 1.0 | 2 | 2 |
| Cole | 1 | 3 | 0 | 3 | 3.0 | 0 | 3 |
| TEAM | 2 | 0 | 2 | -2 | -1.0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 51 | 331 | 14 | 317 | 6.2 | 5 | 33 |

| | Att | Comp | % | Int | Yds | TD | Lg |
|--------------|-----------|-----------|-------------|----------|------------|----------|-----------|
| Robinson | 19 | 12 | 63.2 | 0 | 234 | 1 | 41 |
| Savage | 1 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 20 | 12 | 60.0 | 0 | 234 | 1 | 41 |

| | No | Yds | TD | Lg |
|--------------|-----------|------------|----------|-----------|
| Bowman | 6 | 100 | 0 | 24 |
| Pettigrew | 2 | 46 | 0 | 26 |
| Newton | 1 | 41 | 1 | 41 |
| Hunter | 2 | 37 | 0 | 29 |
| Savage | 1 | 10 | 0 | 10 |
| Total | 12 | 234 | 1 | 41 |

| | No | Yds | TD | Lg |
|--------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Savage | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Cox | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 2 | 1 | 0 | 1 |

| | No | Yds | TD | Lg |
|--------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Cox | 1 | 4 | 0 | 4 |
| Total | 1 | 4 | 0 | 4 |

| | No | Avg | Lg | Blk | TB | FC | 50+ | In 20 |
|--------------|----------|-------------|-----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Fodge | 2 | 39.0 | 45 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Total | 2 | 39.0 | 45 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |

| | Made | Att | Lg | Blkd |
|--------------|----------|----------|-----------|----------|
| Ricks | 1 | 2 | 21 | 0 |
| Total | 1 | 2 | 21 | 0 |

| | Solo | Asst | Tot | TFL | Sack | PD | FF | FR |
|----------|------|------|-----|------|------|----|----|----|
| Lavine | 8 | 5 | 13 | 2-5 | 0-0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Woods | 9 | 3 | 12 | 2-18 | 1-9 | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| Lacey | 5 | 3 | 8 | 0-0 | 0-0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Nethon | 1 | 6 | 7 | 0-0 | 0-0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Price | 2 | 3 | 5 | 0-0 | 0-0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Sexton | 1 | 4 | 5 | 0-0 | 0-0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Burton | 3 | 1 | 4 | 0-0 | 0-0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Moore | 1 | 3 | 4 | 0-0 | 0-0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Peterson | 1 | 3 | 4 | 0-0 | 0-0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Carter | 0 | 3 | 3 | 0-0 | 0-0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Johnson | 2 | 1 | 3 | 0-5 | 0-0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Tea | 2 | 1 | 3 | 0-0 | 0-0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

| | No | Yds | TD | Lg |
|--------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Cox | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Johnson | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

NEBRASKA

| | No | Gain | Lost | Net | Avg | TD | Lg |
|--------------|-----------|------------|-----------|------------|------------|----------|-----------|
| Castille | 20 | 103 | 1 | 102 | 5.1 | 0 | 23 |
| Lucky | 13 | 70 | 4 | 66 | 5.1 | 0 | 11 |
| Helu | 14 | 58 | 3 | 55 | 3.9 | 0 | 12 |
| Keller | 3 | 0 | 17 | -17 | -5.7 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 50 | 231 | 25 | 206 | 4.1 | 0 | 23 |

| | Att | Comp | % | Int | Yds | TD | Lg |
|--------------|-----------|-----------|-------------|----------|------------|----------|-----------|
| Keller | 18 | 10 | 55.6 | 2 | 129 | 2 | 44 |
| Total | 18 | 10 | 55.6 | 2 | 129 | 2 | 44 |

| | No | Yds | TD | Lg |
|--------------|-----------|------------|----------|-----------|
| Peterson | 1 | 44 | 0 | 44 |
| Nunn | 4 | 24 | 0 | 9 |
| Purify | 1 | 24 | 0 | 24 |
| Helu | 1 | 21 | 0 | 21 |
| Phillips | 1 | 13 | 1 | 13 |
| Lucky | 1 | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| Lawson | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Total | 10 | 129 | 2 | 44 |

| | No | Yds | TD | Lg |
|--------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Swift | 1 | 6 | 0 | 6 |
| Total | 1 | 6 | 0 | 6 |

| | No | Yds | TD | Lg |
|--------------|----------|------------|----------|-----------|
| Grixby | 7 | 161 | 0 | 35 |
| Jones | 1 | 26 | 0 | 26 |
| Total | 8 | 187 | 0 | 35 |

| | No | Avg | Lg | Blk | TB | FC | 50+ | In 20 |
|--------------|----------|-------------|-----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Titchener | 4 | 36.8 | 48 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Total | 4 | 36.8 | 48 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |

| | Made | Att | Lg | Blkd |
|--------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Total | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

| | Solo | Asst | Tot | TFL | Sack | PD | FF | FR |
|-------------|------|------|-----|-----|------|----|----|----|
| McKeon | 6 | 4 | 10 | 1-2 | 0-0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Green | 2 | 7 | 9 | 0-0 | 0-0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Murillo | 3 | 5 | 8 | 0-0 | 0-0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Brandenburg | 5 | 1 | 6 | 0-0 | 0-0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Potter | 4 | 2 | 6 | 1-3 | 0-0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Eisenhart | 1 | 4 | 5 | 0-0 | 0-0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Allen | 2 | 2 | 4 | 1-3 | 0-0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Poulosky | 2 | 2 | 4 | 0-5 | 0-0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Dillard | 1 | 2 | 3 | 0-5 | 0-0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Dixon | 1 | 2 | 3 | 0-5 | 0-0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Asante | 0 | 2 | 2 | 0-0 | 0-0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Barfield | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1-1 | 0-0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Bowman | 2 | 0 | 2 | 0-0 | 0-0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Octavien | 0 | 2 | 2 | 0-5 | 0-0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Suh | 1 | 1 | 2 | 0-0 | 0-0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Thenarse | 2 | 0 | 2 | 0-0 | 0-0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Grixby | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0-0 | 0-0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Ruud | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0-0 | 0-0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Wilson | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0-0 | 0-0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

2007 SEASON STATS

RUSHING

| | G | No | Gain | Lost | Net | Avg | TD | Lg | Yd/G |
|-------------------|---|-----|------|------|-----|------|----|----|------|
| Lucky, Marlon | 7 | 138 | 728 | 30 | 698 | 5.1 | 6 | 41 | 99.7 |
| Castille, Quentin | 7 | 50 | 225 | 1 | 224 | 4.5 | 3 | 23 | 32.0 |
| Helu, Roy | 3 | 24 | 97 | 3 | 94 | 3.9 | 0 | 13 | 31.3 |
| Glenn, Cody | 4 | 26 | 86 | 9 | 77 | 3.0 | 2 | 20 | 19.2 |
| Culbert, Major | 5 | 5 | 35 | 0 | 35 | 7.0 | 1 | 17 | 7.0 |
| Ganz, Joe | 2 | 2 | 15 | 0 | 15 | 7.5 | 0 | 9 | 7.5 |
| Purify, Maurice | 6 | 1 | 8 | 0 | 8 | 8.0 | 0 | 8 | 1.3 |
| Nunn, Terrence | 7 | 3 | 4 | 14 | -10 | -3.3 | 0 | 4 | -1.4 |
| Keller, Sam | 7 | 20 | 19 | 68 | -49 | -2.5 | 0 | 4 | |

PASSING

| | G | Att | Comp | % Int | Yds | TD | Lg | YD/G |
|---------------|---|-----|------|-------|-----|------|----|----------|
| Keller, Sam | 7 | 246 | 156 | 63.4 | 10 | 1849 | 11 | 73 264.1 |
| Lucky, Marlon | 7 | 1 | 1 | 100.0 | 0 | 20 | 1 | 20 2.9 |
| Ganz, Joe | 2 | 1 | 1 | 100.0 | 0 | 19 | 0 | 19 9.5 |

RECEIVING

| | G | No | Yds | Avg | TD | Lg | Yd/G |
|--------------------|---|----|-----|------|----|----|------|
| Purify, Maurice | 6 | 25 | 332 | 13.3 | 1 | 38 | 55.3 |
| Lucky, Marlon | 7 | 36 | 263 | 7.3 | 1 | 20 | 37.6 |
| Swift, Nate | 7 | 20 | 256 | 12.8 | 1 | 21 | 36.6 |
| Nunn, Terrence | 7 | 21 | 243 | 11.6 | 0 | 30 | 34.7 |
| Hill, Sean | 7 | 11 | 229 | 20.8 | 3 | 73 | 32.7 |
| Peterson, Todd | 7 | 10 | 169 | 16.9 | 2 | 44 | 24.1 |
| Hardy, Frantz | 7 | 9 | 142 | 15.8 | 0 | 60 | 20.3 |
| Glenn, Cody | 4 | 6 | 52 | 8.7 | 0 | 19 | 13.0 |
| Erickson, Dan | 7 | 4 | 46 | 11.5 | 0 | 19 | 6.6 |
| Helu, Roy | 3 | 2 | 26 | 13.0 | 0 | 21 | 8.7 |
| McNeill, Mike | 3 | 1 | 25 | 25.0 | 0 | 25 | 8.3 |
| Teafattler, Hunter | 6 | 3 | 21 | 7.0 | 0 | 11 | 3.5 |
| Phillips, J.B. | 7 | 2 | 19 | 9.5 | 1 | 13 | 2.7 |
| Castille, Quentin | 7 | 1 | 15 | 15.0 | 0 | 15 | 2.1 |
| Sand, Andy | 7 | 1 | 15 | 15.0 | 0 | 15 | 2.1 |
| Young, Dreu | 5 | 1 | 14 | 14.0 | 0 | 14 | 2.8 |
| Lawson, Thomas | 5 | 3 | 11 | 3.7 | 3 | 6 | 2.2 |
| Paul, Niles | 4 | 1 | 6 | 6.0 | 0 | 6 | 1.5 |
| Brooks, Chris | 1 | 1 | 4 | 4.0 | 0 | 4 | 4.0 |

PUNT RETURNS LEADERS

| | G | No | Yds | Avg | TD | Lg | Yd/G |
|-----------------|---|----|-----|------|----|----|------|
| Grixby, Cortney | 7 | 7 | 36 | 5.1 | 0 | 16 | 5.1 |
| Jones, Andre | 6 | 2 | 25 | 12.5 | 0 | 24 | 4.2 |

KICKOFF RETURNS LEADERS

| | G | No | Yds | Avg | TD | Lg | Yd/G |
|-----------------|---|----|-----|------|----|----|-------|
| Grixby, Cortney | 7 | 29 | 720 | 24.8 | 0 | 51 | 102.9 |
| Jones, Andre | 6 | 9 | 201 | 22.3 | 0 | 31 | 33.5 |

PUNTING

| | G | No | Avg | Lg | Blk | TC | 50+ | In | 20 |
|----------------|---|----|------|----|-----|----|-----|----|----|
| Titchener, Dan | 7 | 29 | 41.2 | 51 | 0 | 2 | 7 | 1 | 9 |
| Henery, Alex | 7 | 1 | 32.0 | 32 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |

FIELD GOALS

| | G | Att | Made | Lg | Blkd |
|--------------|---|-----|------|----|------|
| Henery, Alex | 7 | 5 | 5 | 39 | 0 |
| Kunalic, Adi | 7 | 1 | 1 | 46 | 0 |

DEFENSE LEADERS

| | G | Tack | Asst | Tot | TFL | Sack | PD | FF | FR |
|------------------|---|------|------|-----|------|------|----|----|----|
| Ruud, Bo | 7 | 22 | 20 | 42 | 3-9 | 0-0 | 1 | 2 | 0 |
| Octavien, Steve | 7 | 27 | 12 | 39 | 5-28 | 0-4 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Asante, Larry | 7 | 15 | 22 | 37 | 0-0 | 0-0 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| McKeon, Corey | 7 | 19 | 18 | 37 | 4-8 | 0-0 | 4 | 0 | 1 |
| Murillo, Armando | 7 | 22 | 15 | 37 | 0-0 | 0-0 | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| Potter, Zach | 7 | 19 | 14 | 33 | 8-20 | 2-10 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Brandenburg, L. | 7 | 22 | 9 | 31 | 0-0 | 0-0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Dillard, Phillip | 7 | 18 | 11 | 29 | 0-1 | 0-0 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Green, Tierre | 7 | 8 | 18 | 26 | 0-0 | 0-0 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| Bowman, Zackary | 6 | 18 | 6 | 24 | 0-0 | 0-0 | 3 | 0 | 0 |

TEAM STATISTICS

| | NU | OPP |
|--------------------------------|------------|-----------|
| Total First Downs | 163 | 162 |
| Rushing | 53 | 68 |
| Passing | 94 | 83 |
| Penalty | 16 | 11 |
| Total Net Yards | 2971 | 3200 |
| Total Plays | 521 | 533 |
| Yards Per Play | 5.7 | 6.0 |
| Yards Per Game | 424.4 | 457.1 |
| Rushing Attempts-Yards | 273-1083 | 289-1460 |
| Yards Per Attempt | 4.0 | 5.1 |
| Yards Per Game | 154.7 | 208.6 |
| Pass Att.-Comp.-Int. | 248-158-10 | 244-138-7 |
| Passing Yards | 1888 | 1740 |
| Yards Per Completion | 11.9 | 12.6 |
| Yards Per Game | 269.7 | 248.6 |
| Punting: No.-Avg. | 30-40.9 | 32-41.0 |
| Fumbles-Lost | 10-6 | 11-3 |
| Penalties-Yards | 44-350 | 49-419 |
| Sacks By-Yds. Lost | 6-34 | 9-62 |
| Third-Down Conversions | 346-104 | 49-105 |
| Conversion Pct. | 44.2 | 46.7 |
| Fourth-Down Conversions | 5-10 | 6-9 |
| Conversion Pct. | 50.0 | 66.7 |
| Avg. Time Of Possession | 30:21 | 29:39 |

| Scoring | 1st | 2nd | 3rd | 4th | OT | TOT |
|-----------|-----|-----|-----|-----|----|-----|
| Nebraska | 27 | 51 | 59 | 62 | 0 | 199 |
| Opponents | 41 | 78 | 63 | 37 | 0 | 219 |

2007 RESULTS, SCHEDULE

| | | | |
|----|----------|--|-----|
| 1 | Sept. 1 | Nevada (2-3), W 52-10 | 1-0 |
| 2 | Sept. 8 | @Wake Forest (4-2), W 20-17 | 2-0 |
| 3 | Sept. 15 | USC (5-1), L 49-31 | 2-1 |
| 4 | Sept. 22 | Ball State (4-3), W 41-40 | 3-1 |
| 5 | Sept. 29 | Iowa State (1-5), W 35-17 | 4-1 |
| 6 | Oct. 6 | @Missouri (5-1), L 41-6 | 4-2 |
| 7 | Oct. 13 | Oklahoma St. (4-3), L 45-14 | 4-3 |
| 8 | Oct. 20 | Texas A&M (5-2), TBA | |
| 9 | Oct. 27 | @Texas (5-2), TBA | |
| 10 | Nov. 3 | @Kansas (6-0), TBA | |
| 11 | Nov. 10 | Kansas State (4-2), TBA | |
| 12 | Nov. 23 | @Colorado (4-3), 11 a.m., ABC | |
| | Dec. 1 | Big 12 Championship at San Antonio, Texas, 7 p.m., ABC | |

SCOUTING REPORT

GAME 8

Texas A&M Oct. 20

Location: College Station, Texas

Enrollment: 46,587

2007 record: 5-2

Coach: Dennis Franchione, 5th year

Series: Nebraska leads 10-2

Time TBA
Memorial Stadium, Lincoln, Neb.

Quick Facts

Texas A&M led 7-0 after one quarter, but Texas Tech scored 35 unanswered points to hand the Aggies their first Big 12 loss.

A&M is 5-0 at home but has lost both of its road games.

The Aggies have three rushers among the nation's top 100 — quarterback Stephen McGee (77.7) and running backs Jorvorskie Lane (63.6) and Mike Goodson (61.9).

A&M has 15 takeaways and has committed eight turnovers.

Aggie to Watch

Junior Stephen McGee is one of the nation's top dual-threat quarterbacks. He has passed for 1,039 yards and four touchdowns and also leads the Aggies in rushing with 544 yards and has scored four touchdowns. Last season as a sophomore, he finished with 2,295 passing yards and 666 on the ground.



BIG 12 AT A GLANCE

| | North | | | | South | | | |
|------------|-------|---|---|---|------------|---|---|---|
| | W | L | T | W | L | T | W | L |
| Kansas | 2 | 0 | 6 | 0 | Oklahoma | 2 | 1 | 6 |
| Kansas St. | 2 | 1 | 4 | 2 | Texas Tech | 2 | 1 | 6 |
| Colorado | 2 | 1 | 4 | 3 | Texas A&M | 2 | 1 | 5 |
| Missouri | 1 | 1 | 5 | 1 | Okla. St. | 2 | 1 | 4 |
| Nebraska | 1 | 2 | 4 | 3 | Texas | 1 | 2 | 5 |
| Iowa State | 0 | 3 | 1 | 6 | Baylor | 0 | 3 | 3 |

Saturday, Oct. 13

Oklahoma State 45, Nebraska 14
Texas Tech 35, Texas A&M 7
Texas 56, Iowa State 3
Kansas 58, Baylor 10
Kansas State 47, Colorado 20
Oklahoma 41, Missouri 31

ON DECK

At Texas Oct. 27

Location: Austin, Texas

Enrollment: 37,069

2007 record: 5-2

Coach: Mack Brown, 10th year

Series: Texas leads 7-4

Time TBA

Memorial Stadium, Austin, Texas



TENTATIVE 2-DEEPS

NEBRASKA OFFENSE

| | | | | | |
|----|----|------------------|-----|-----|------|
| WR | 87 | Nate Swift** | 6-2 | 200 | Jr. |
| | 16 | Maurice Purify* | 6-4 | 220 | Sr. |
| LT | 77 | Carl Nicks* | 6-5 | 330 | Sr. |
| | 65 | Mike Smith | 6-6 | 285 | RFr. |
| LG | 57 | Jacob Hickman* | 6-4 | 285 | So. |
| | 68 | Keith Williams | 6-5 | 310 | RFr. |
| C | 59 | Brett Byford* | 6-3 | 300 | Sr. |
| | 69 | Jordan Picou | 6-2 | 305 | Sr. |
| RG | 61 | Mike Huff** | 6-4 | 300 | Jr. |
| | 73 | D.J. Jones | 6-5 | 310 | RFr. |
| RT | 76 | Lydon Murtha** | 6-7 | 305 | Jr. |
| | 70 | Matt Slauson** | 6-5 | 335 | Jr. |
| HB | 86 | Sean Hill | 6-3 | 250 | Sr. |
| | 85 | J.B. Phillips*** | 6-3 | 245 | Sr. |
| WR | 83 | Terrence Nunn*** | 6-0 | 190 | Sr. |
| | 7 | Frantz Hardy** | 6-1 | 190 | Sr. |
| QB | 9 | Sam Keller | 6-4 | 230 | Sr. |
| | 12 | Joe Ganz* | 6-1 | 200 | Jr. |
| FB | 36 | Thomas Lawson* | 6-0 | 240 | Jr. |
| | 48 | Andy Sand | 6-2 | 230 | Sr. |
| IB | 5 | Marlon Lucky** | 6-0 | 210 | Jr. |
| | 34 | Cody Glenn | 6-0 | 230 | Jr. |
| PK | 90 | Alex Henery | 6-2 | 170 | RFr. |

NEBRASKA DEFENSE

| | | | | | |
|-----|----|-----------------------|-----|-----|------|
| DE | 99 | Barry Turner** | 6-3 | 270 | Jr. |
| | 88 | Clayton Slevers** | 6-4 | 245 | Jr. |
| NT | 93 | Ndamukong Suh* | 6-4 | 305 | So. |
| | 56 | Shukree Barfield | 6-4 | 310 | Jr. |
| DT | 43 | Ty Steinkuhler** | 6-3 | 285 | Jr. |
| | 97 | Kevin Dixon | 6-3 | 295 | Jr. |
| DE | 98 | Zach Potter** | 6-7 | 280 | Jr. |
| | 95 | Pierre Allen | 6-5 | 265 | RFr. |
| SLB | 51 | Bo Ruud*** | 6-3 | 235 | Sr. |
| | 12 | Blake Lawrence | 6-2 | 220 | Fr. |
| MLB | 52 | Phillip Dillard* | 6-1 | 250 | So. |
| | 13 | Corey McKeon** | 6-1 | 225 | Sr. |
| WLB | 40 | Lance Brandenburgh*** | 6-1 | 230 | Sr. |
| | 15 | Steve Octavien* | 6-0 | 240 | Sr. |
| LCB | 5 | Armando Murillo | 6-0 | 195 | Jr. |
| | 25 | Andre Jones* | 6-0 | 190 | Sr. |
| FS | 30 | Tierre Green*** | 6-1 | 200 | Sr. |
| | 3 | Rickey Thenarse* | 6-0 | 190 | So. |
| SS | 4 | Larry Asante | 6-1 | 210 | So. |
| | 9 | Bryan Wilson* | 6-1 | 205 | Sr. |
| RCB | 1 | Zack Bowman* | 6-2 | 200 | Sr. |
| | 2 | Cortney Grixby*** | 5-9 | 170 | Sr. |
| P | 97 | Dan Titchener* | 6-0 | 200 | Jr. |

TEXAS A&M OFFENSE

| | | | | | |
|----|----|---------------------|------|-----|------|
| WR | 2 | Earvin Taylor*** | 6-3 | 231 | Sr. |
| | 20 | Michael Corey | 6-4 | 205 | Sr. |
| QT | 75 | Travis Schneider** | 6-9 | 303 | Jr. |
| | 71 | Yemi Babalola** | 6-4 | 315 | Jr. |
| QG | 64 | Kirk Elder*** | 6-5 | 308 | Sr. |
| | 74 | Lee Grimes | 6-6 | 339 | So. |
| C | 70 | Cody Wallace** | 6-4 | 296 | Sr. |
| | 63 | Kevin Matthews | 6-4 | 300 | So. |
| SG | 51 | Chris Yoder*** | 6-3 | 314 | Sr. |
| | 76 | Michael Shumard* | 6-5 | 309 | So. |
| ST | 54 | Corey Clark*** | 6-6 | 326 | Sr. |
| | 79 | Robbie Frost | 6-6 | 302 | So. |
| TE | 13 | Martellus Bennett** | 6-7 | 255 | Sr. |
| | 91 | Ryan Vaughan | 6-4 | 228 | Jr. |
| WR | 8 | Kerry Franks*** | 5-11 | 192 | Sr. |
| | 88 | Cody Beyer | 6-1 | 182 | So. |
| QB | 7 | Stephen McGee** | 6-3 | 220 | Jr. |
| | 1 | Jerrold Johnson | 6-6 | 232 | RFr. |
| FB | 24 | Chris Alexander*** | 5-11 | 248 | Sr. |
| | 44 | Nick LaMantia* | 6-1 | 226 | Jr. |
| TB | 11 | Jorvorskie Lane** | 6-0 | 268 | Jr. |
| | 3 | Mike Goodson* | 6-0 | 206 | So. |
| PK | 7 | Matt Szymanski* | 6-1 | 194 | So. |

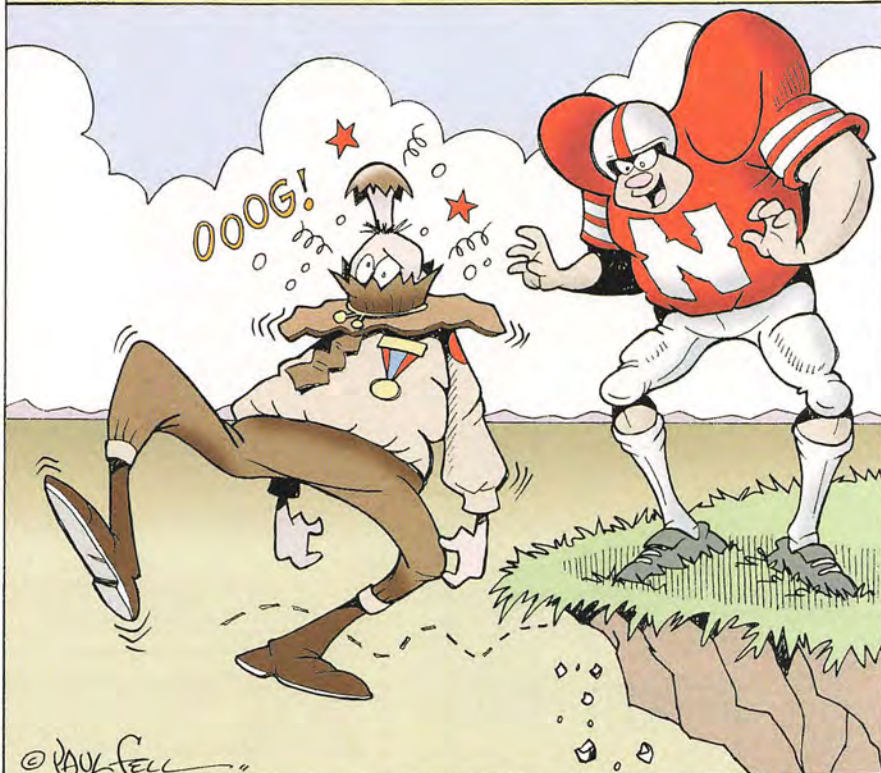
TEXAS A&M DEFENSE

| | | | | | |
|-----|----|---------------------|------|-----|------|
| DE | 92 | Chris Harrington*** | 6-5 | 268 | Sr. |
| | 86 | Amos Gbunblee** | 6-5 | 252 | Jr. |
| DT | 85 | Red Bryant*** | 6-5 | 322 | Sr. |
| | 84 | Chris Smith* | 6-4 | 270 | Jr. |
| NT | 95 | Henry Smith* | 6-3 | 315 | Sr. |
| | 91 | Kellen Heard* | 6-6 | 331 | So. |
| DE | 49 | Cyril Obiozor** | 6-5 | 266 | Jr. |
| | 11 | Michael Bennett** | 6-4 | 265 | Jr. |
| SLB | 50 | Mark Dodge* | 6-2 | 220 | Sr. |
| | 46 | Matt Featherston* | 6-3 | 233 | So. |
| MLB | 37 | Misi Tupe* | 5-10 | 254 | Sr. |
| | 36 | Anthony Lewis* | 6-2 | 245 | So. |
| WH | 25 | Jordan Pugh* | 6-0 | 185 | So. |
| | 15 | Kenny Brown | 6-2 | 205 | RFr. |
| CB | 4 | Danny Gorrer** | 6-0 | 177 | Jr. |
| | 18 | Arkeith Brown** | 6-0 | 173 | Jr. |
| FS | 26 | Devin Gregg** | 6-0 | 191 | Jr. |
| | 29 | Stephen Hodge*** | 6-1 | 218 | Sr. |
| SS | 9 | Alton Dixon** | 5-11 | 196 | Jr. |
| | 30 | Chevar Bryson* | 6-0 | 188 | So. |
| CB | 13 | Marquis Carpenter** | 6-0 | 172 | Sr. |
| | 27 | Jordan Peterson* | 5-11 | 184 | So. |
| P | 16 | Justin Brantly** | 6-4 | 245 | Jr. |

THE PAUL FELL PREDICTION

NEBRASKA vs.

TEXAS A&M



OCTOBER 20, 2007

HUSKERS HOPE TO USE HOME FIELD ADVANTAGE TO PUSH AGGIES OFF COURSE IN THIS BIG 12 NORTH-SOUTH MATCHUP!

Picks

Oct.
20



Brian Hill
Editor



Mike Babcock
Cont. Editor



Terry Douglass
G.I. Independent



Sean Callahan
KFAB/Rivals.com



Chris Schmidt
ESPN 1480
(Guest)

Texas A&M
@Nebraska

Nebraska 31,
Texas A&M 30

Texas A&M 28,
Nebraska 17

Texas A&M 35,
Nebraska 20

Texas A&M 31,
Nebraska 21

Texas A&M 35,
Nebraska 10

Kansas
@Colorado

Colorado 20,
Kansas 17

Colorado 24,
Kansas 21

Kansas 27,
Colorado 21

Kansas 38,
Colorado 27

Colorado 28,
Kansas 24

Kansas State
@Oklahoma St.

Kansas St. 30,
Okla. St. 27

Kansas St. 21,
Okla. St. 17

Okla. St. 35,
Kansas St. 24

Okla. St. 41,
Kansas St. 37

Okla. St. 35,
Kansas St. 28

Michigan
@Illinois

Michigan 20,
Illinois 17

Illinois 28,
Michigan 27

Michigan 20,
Illinois 10

Michigan 38,
Illinois 21

Illinois 27,
Michigan 24

Last Week
Season

2-2
16-12

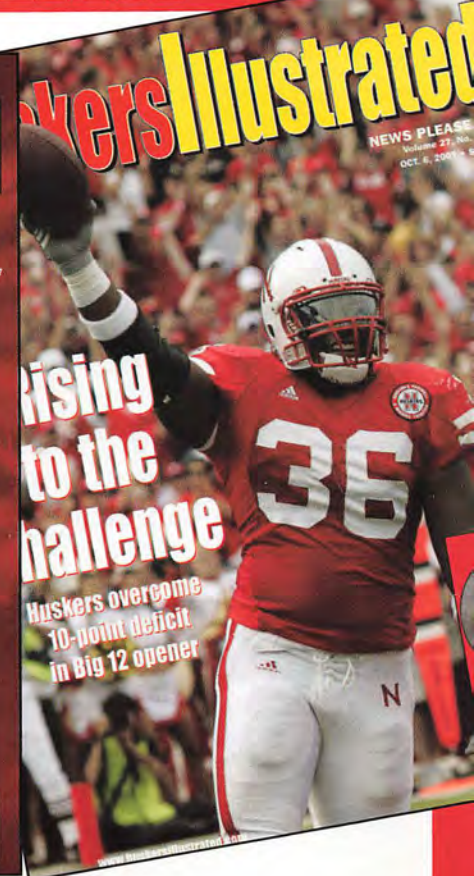
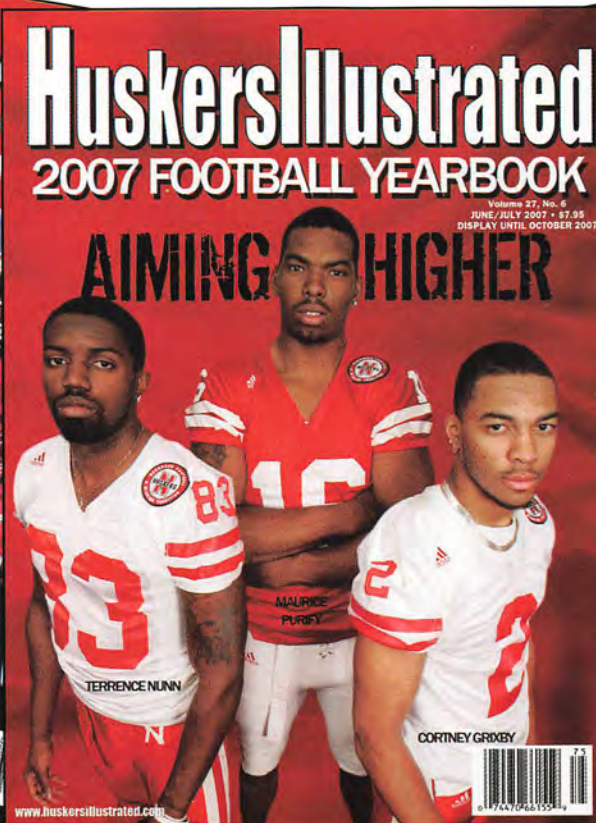
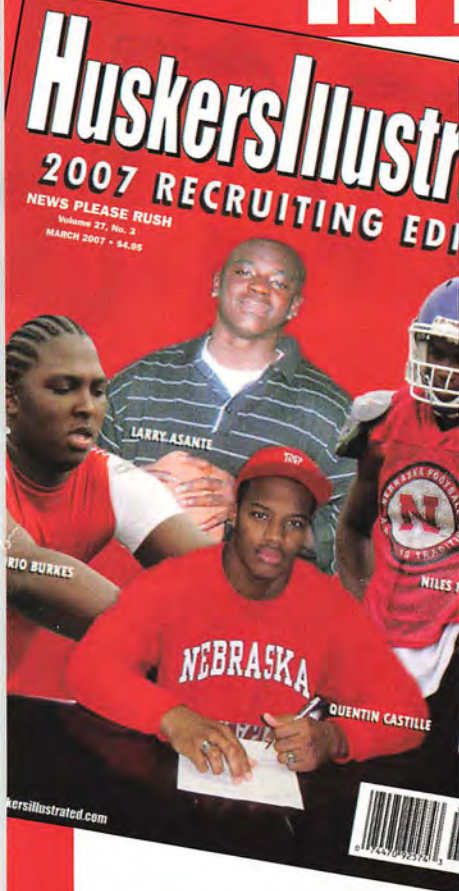
2-2
21-7

2-2
19-9

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18-10

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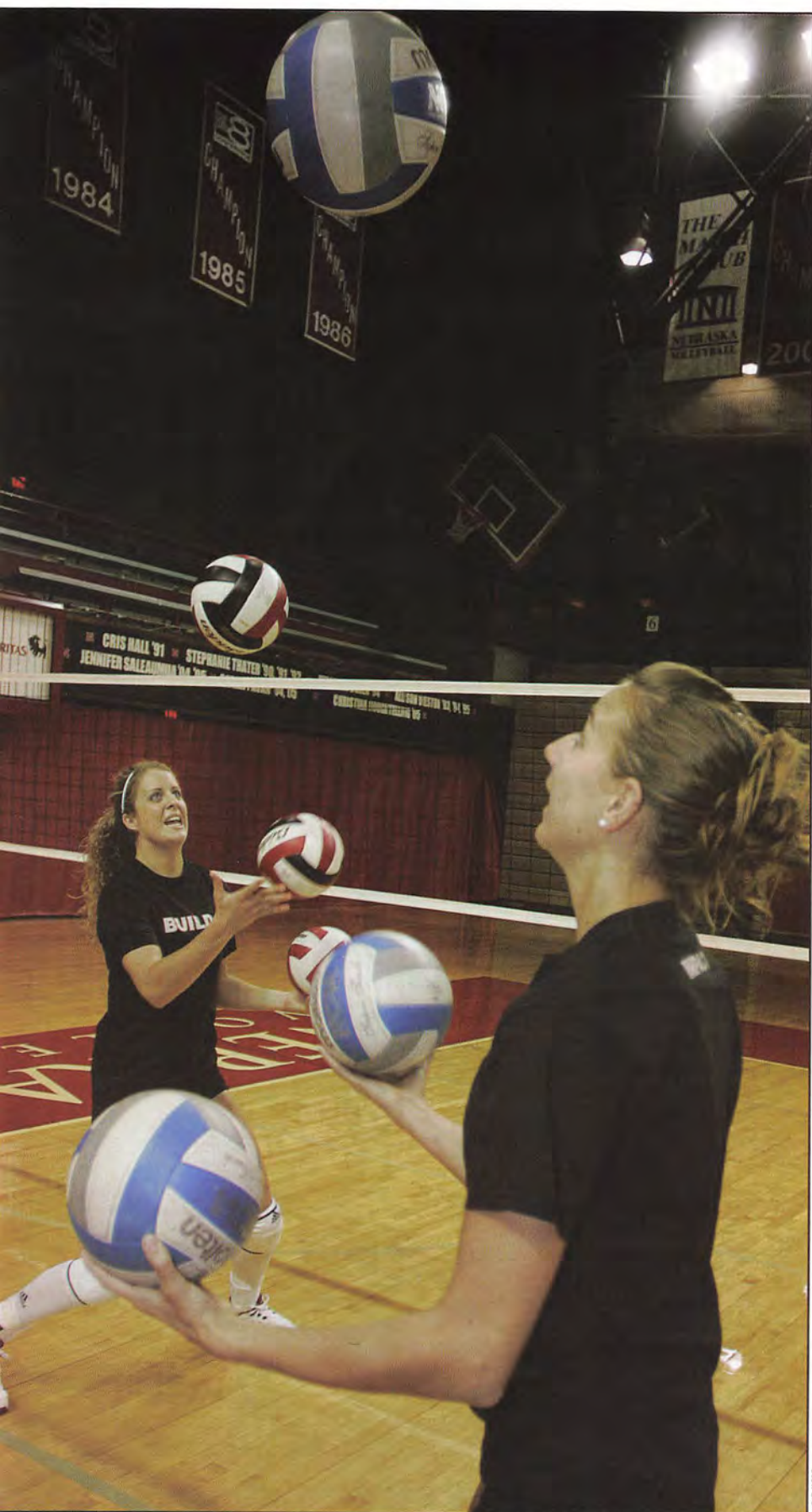
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. . . All The Time



Tracy Stalls (left) and Amanda Gates try their luck at juggling volleyballs during a practice session.

Gett

*Husker coach
always looking
for new ways
to challenge
veteran team*

By Bob Hamar

This may not have made the news, but Nebraska's volleyball team lost on Monday, Oct. 1.

No, it wasn't an official match. The Huskers were in the middle of a long winning streak that dates back to a 3-2 loss in Colorado on Nov. 11, 2006.

"We lost in practice yesterday. They were reminded of that," Nebraska coach John Cook said a day later. "They couldn't win a drill we were trying to do. They came really close and couldn't get it done. They get humbled in practice."

With such a dominant, veteran team on the court, Cook has to look for ways to challenge the defending national champions. Most of the matches haven't been too tough, so Cook is making practices as difficult as possible.

Cook seems to enjoy the process of developing drills to challenge his players. At the same time, he doesn't want to make it too tough.

"That's what I do at night," Cook said. "Each team, you have to adjust the level of what they have to do to be successful. So now, I'm kind of figuring out, based on the competition on the other side do the net, what scoring we have to use in order for them to really have to play great to win that drill."

ing Creative

"We have our core drills we do, but we keep tweaking them to raise the level or lower the level."

— NU coach John Cook

"If they can play at that level, they know they can beat anybody in the country. That's how we're challenging them."

The drill the Huskers lost was one they had won a week earlier. It's a drill where the starters have to battle to game point, and then they get one chance to win it. If they don't, they go back to zero and start over again.

"It took them about 20 minutes to get to the point where they could win it," Cook said. "We're creating situations in practice where they have to be great to be successful."

"We're just instilling the mentality that every day this is the level we're going to be at. A lot of the other basic fundamental drills we do, we have scoring or criteria for them to get out of it."

Senior outside hitter Christina Houghtelling understands what Cook is trying to do.

"Once you get to game point, if you don't perform and get a side out or win the rally, you get knocked back because you have to win those points," Houghtelling said. "It's going to be crucial in big games."

The Huskers are also challenged by their competition in practice. That competition includes former All-American Nancy Metcalf along with volunteer coach Ryan Walthall and graduate manager Dan Meske.

Current players like setter Maggie Griffin and freshman libero Kayla Banwarth are also on the other side of the net making things as difficult as possible.

"When you look at our practices and who we're playing against, I mean Nancy Metcalf and Brian and

Dan," Houghtelling said. "Maggie is doing a great job over there and Kayla. Every libero over there is great. You're just not going to find the height and the block at the net like that in any other game."

"When you have Nancy and two guys blocking against you and the great back row we have, you can't get a much better team over there. We definitely are training against one of the best teams we'll ever see. They make us compete every day. It's a challenge, but it's fun to go to practice when you're going to face that."

Cook will continue to look for new ways to challenge the Huskers. He has to find a way to keep the team improving even as they are sweeping through Big 12 Conference play.

Cook spends a couple of hours a day planning drills for practice.

"We have our core drills we do, but we keep tweaking them to raise the level or lower the level," Cook said. "Again, it gives them a gauge of what they can do. The challenge as a coach is you want to raise the bar high enough, but you don't want them to lose their confidence. That's the art of coaching."

Cook also keeps the players motivated by coming up with little things to inspire them. It might be a statistic from the upcoming opponent or a quote from an opposing player or coach.

"Every day in practice, he says something to fire us up," Houghtelling said. "He always comes up with some stat or something to get under our skin, so we have motivation every day."

The ultimate goal is for the Huskers to be great every match. That's not an easy thing to do in any sports.

"It's hard to be good every night," Cook said. "When you have a team that is capable of doing that, it's a special group. They've done a great job of

preparing themselves.

"This team has a maturity and an understanding of what needs to happen, where they're at and the long-term outlook of this season." ■

Bob Hamar covers the Nebraska volleyball team for the Grand Island (Neb.) Independent. He can be reached at bob.hamar@theindependent.com

RESULTS, SCHEDULE

AVCA Showcase

At Qwest Center Omaha

| | | |
|---------|---------------|-------|
| Aug. 24 | vs. Tennessee | W 3-0 |
| Aug. 25 | vs. UCLA | W 3-1 |

Holiday Inn Classic

NU Coliseum/Qwest Center Omaha

| | | |
|---------|----------------------|-------|
| Aug. 31 | vs. Creighton (NU) | W 3-0 |
| Sept. 2 | vs. Penn St. (Omaha) | W 3-0 |
| Sept. 3 | vs. Cal Poly (NU) | W 3-0 |

Ameritas Players Challenge

NU Coliseum

| | | |
|---------|--------------------|-------|
| Sept. 7 | vs. Duke | W 3-0 |
| Sept. 8 | vs. New Mexico St. | W 3-0 |

(Home matches at NU Coliseum, unless noted)

| | | |
|----------|------------------|-----------|
| Sept. 12 | Texas | W 3-0 |
| Sept. 15 | @Texas Tech | W 3-0 |
| Sept. 22 | Texas A&M | W 3-0 |
| Sept. 26 | @Kansas | W 3-0 |
| Sept. 29 | Baylor | W 3-0 |
| Oct. 3 | Kansas State | W 3-0 |
| Oct. 6 | @Colorado | W 3-0 |
| Oct. 10 | Iowa State | W 3-0 |
| Oct. 13 | @Oklahoma | 1 p.m. |
| Oct. 17 | @Missouri | 6:30 p.m. |
| Oct. 20 | Kansas | TBA |
| Oct. 21 | Hawaii (Devaney) | 5 p.m. |
| Oct. 24 | @Texas | 6:30 p.m. |
| Oct. 31 | Missouri | 7 p.m. |
| Nov. 3 | @Kansas State | 7 p.m. |
| Nov. 7 | Colorado | 7 p.m. |
| Nov. 11 | @Iowa State | 3 p.m. |
| Nov. 14 | @Texas A&M | 6:30 p.m. |
| Nov. 17 | Oklahoma | 7 p.m. |
| Nov. 21 | @Baylor | 6:30 p.m. |
| Nov. 24 | Texas Tech | 7 p.m. |

Nov. 29-Dec. 2

NCAA First/Second Rounds At Campus Sites

Dec. 7-8

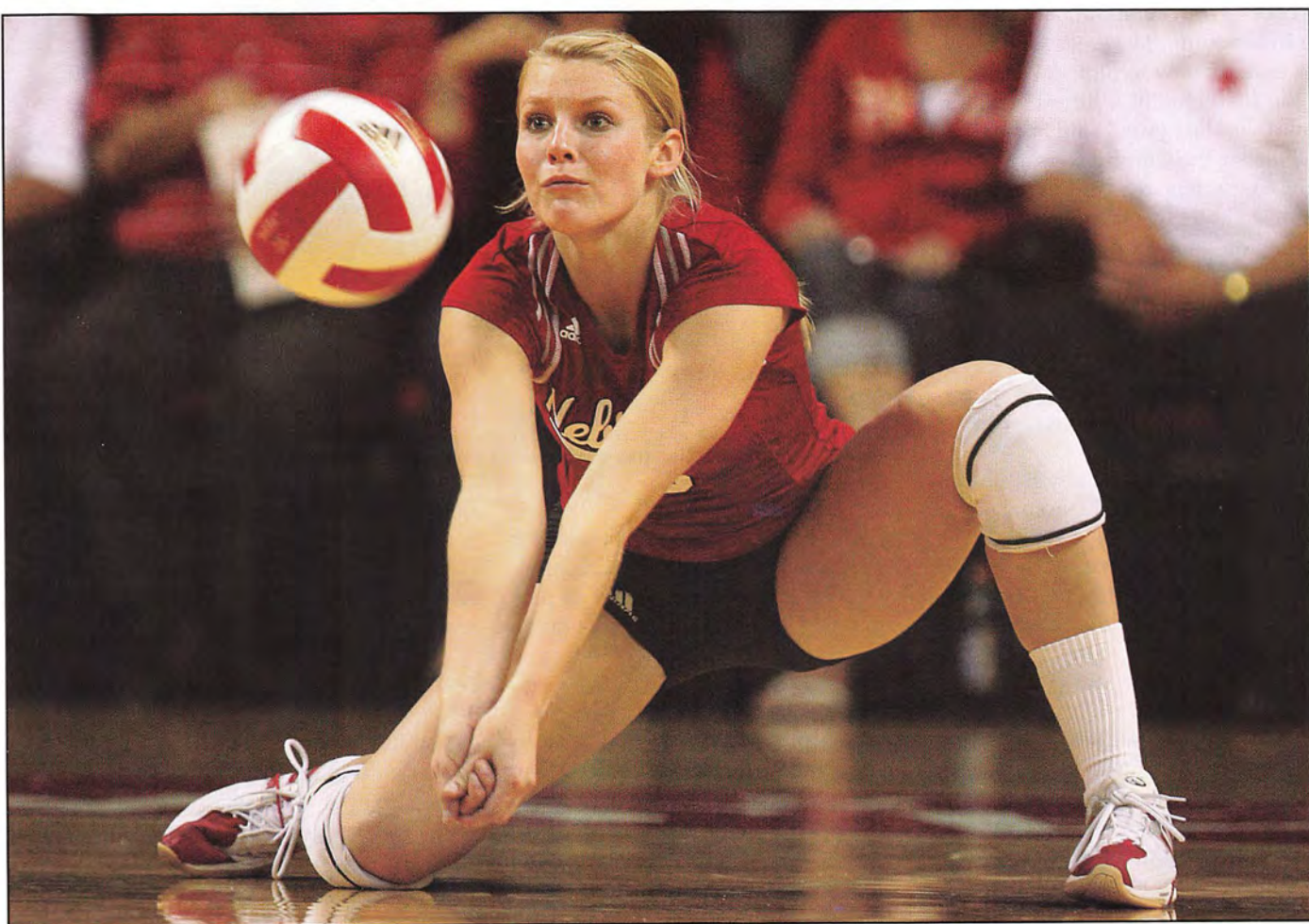
NCAA Regionals At Campus Sites

Dec 13-15

NCAA Final Four At Sacramento, Calif.



The top-ranked Nebraska volleyball team continues to roll along, sweeping opponent after opponent, including No. 17 Kansas State on Oct. 3 at the NU Coliseum. Senior outside hitter Christina Houghtelling (above) celebrates after a block, the team discusses strategy (top right) during the 30-16, 30-16, 30-2 victory, and junior libero Rachel Schwartz (bottom right) gets a dig. (PHOTOS BY SCOTT BRUHN)



'A Little Bit Better'

Sadler reminded that last year's team entirely new to him

By Mike Babcock

Doc Sadler and Texas & M coach Billy Gillispie were talking on the phone recently, as they do every day, about how many new players each has on his team this season.

Sadler has eight scholarship newcomers, four freshmen and four junior college transfers. But, as Gillispie reminded him, last season's team was entirely new to him.

"So it's actually a little bit better than it was last year," said Sadler.

Even so, the Cornhuskers' second-year coach has reason for concern because, "the guys we're going to be relying on at key positions are all new," he said. "So I think if you come and watch us practice early, I'm going to divide it up and you'll see me spend more time with those guys.

"They are going to be key members and components of what success we do have."

Practice was to officially begin on the day before the Oklahoma State football game.

New players or not, Sadler will have more with whom to work after a season in which the roster was depleted by injuries to such a degree that practices were difficult, much less games.

Now, with six walk-ons in addition to the 13 scholarship players, Sadler expects plenty of competition to shape the team. Last season there "wasn't any competition for playing time, in my opinion," he said.

"I really think that's going to be a



Doc Sadler opens practice this season with 19 players, including six walk-ons.

huge, huge benefit to us."

Those who don't put in the effort will find themselves watching. They'll be bystanders instead of participants. "I think that's when you've got a chance to have a good team," Sadler said.

Such competition also requires leadership, something that has to emerge rather than be assigned. Last season, seniors Charles Richardson and Marcus Perry provided it.

Aleks Maric, around whom this year's team will be built, is its only senior. And he's "not a vocal leader,"

said Sadler. "Aleks wants to do it, and it's going to be his team."

But whether he can provide the necessary leadership remains to be seen.

He can lead by example, but beyond that, "we'll see," Sadler said. "It's going to be a key because you've got so many competing. Last year, it wasn't hard to decide who was going to play, so everybody was happy. This year, you're going to have some unhappy people. That's part of it.

"But that's where the effort comes in, too."

Anyone could step into a leadership role, even a freshman. "Who knows?" said Sadler. "I don't care who it is. It may have to be me, and I don't mean this wrong, but that's not good."

Players need to provide it. "But if someone doesn't step up, I'm not just going to let it . . . act like, 'Well, nobody's stepped up.' It's still my job. So that's what we'll try to do," he said.

Replacing Richardson at point guard is a priority. In addition to being the vocal leader Sadler wants, he led the team in assists (179) and steals (56), and rarely came off the court.

He averaged just over 36 minutes a game.

Point guard "is probably the biggest question mark in what kind of a season we're going to have," Sadler said, because it will be handled by players with limited or no college experience.

Freshmen Cookie Miller and Brandon Richardson will compete for the job, as will sophomore Jay-R Strowbridge, who started 13 games last season — and averaged 19.2 min-

2007-08 Roster

| Player | Pos. | Ht. | Wt. | Yr. |
|--------------------|------|------|-----|------|
| Ryan Anderson | G | 6-4 | 200 | So. |
| Chris Balham | F | 6-8 | 235 | So. |
| Alex Chapman | F | 6-9 | 225 | So. |
| Ade Dagunduro | G | 6-5 | 190 | Jr. |
| *Mike Diacos | G | 6-1 | 175 | Fr. |
| Alonzo Edwards | F | 6-7 | 225 | Fr. |
| Steve Harley | G | 5-11 | 170 | Jr. |
| Sek Henry | G | 6-3 | 195 | So. |
| *Nick Krenk | G | 6-0 | 170 | Jr. |
| Aleks Maric | C | 6-11 | 275 | Sr. |
| Toney McCray | G | 6-6 | 185 | Fr. |
| Cookie Miller | G | 5-7 | 165 | Fr. |
| *Ben Nelson | F | 6-8 | 225 | So. |
| Shang Ping | F | 6-10 | 230 | Jr. |
| Brandon Richardson | G | 6-0 | 160 | Fr. |
| *Cole Salomon | G | 6-4 | 220 | So. |
| Jay-R Strowbridge | G | 5-11 | 185 | So. |
| *Paul Velandar | G | 6-2 | 190 | Jr. |
| *Andrew Wicklund | G | 6-5 | 170 | RFr. |
| *walk-on | | | | |

utes.

Strowbridge "complained a lot and had some problems with his knee last year, but I didn't realize maybe the extent," said Sadler. "He's probably been one of the biggest surprises with his quickness this year, in the couple of weeks we've had individual workouts. So it's going to be inter-

esting."

Sadler expected the team to be in good health to begin practice. Alex Chapman, a junior college transfer, "tweaked" a knee, which had to be scoped, and Alonzo Edwards, a freshman, was sidelined a couple of weeks with "a real bad strain," a hip flexor, Sadler said.

Both might be a little behind as far as conditioning.

A year ago, conditioning for two players would have been a serious matter. Not so much now.

"I'm excited because athletically and then depth-wise we're in a much better position than we were a year ago," said Sadler. "I think as a whole the team from point guard on down is more athletic. It's bigger. The wings — I have no question — are going to be competitive athletically, as most people we play.

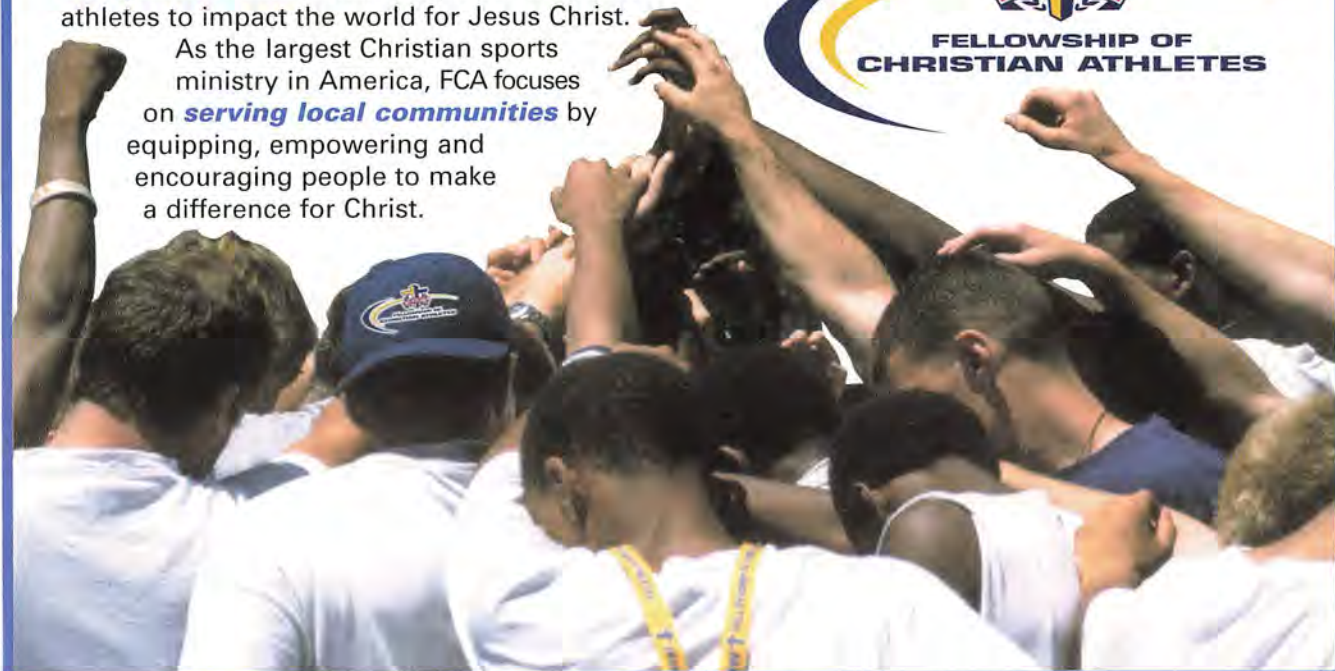
"When that happens, I think that improves all of it."

It's that time of year. "Most people tell by the changing of the colors of trees and things, but I think most coaches tell by lack of sleep," he said. "We're starting to get fewer and fewer hours." ■

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Pitcher Balances Busy Life

*Nebraska senior Weber
has more on his plate
than most student-athletes*

BY KATELYN KERKHOVE

For Thad Weber, life is a balancing act.

There is, of course, class and homework, tests and professors.

And then there is Nebraska baseball practice, conditioning and meetings.

For most college baseball pitchers, it would end there, but for Weber there is one element of his life that he just couldn't live without — his wife, Megan.

One December evening in 2005, Weber decided he would take Megan out to dinner, and when they got back home, he suggested a game of Scrabble. When she opened the game, the words "will you marry me?" were spelled out across the board.

"Luckily she said, 'yes,'" Weber said.

Now, married since July of 2006, Weber says Megan is his biggest fan on the field and off. And, while they see each other only a few hours a week, there's no way he would change a thing.

"She's been the most understanding and the best about baseball,"

Weber said. "With going out for summer ball and traveling during the spring. I mean she couldn't be better than she has been for the time we've been away (from each other). She's absolutely No. 1."

During junior college at Hutchinson (Kan.) Community College, Weber made a promise to Megan that he would make it to a higher level of college baseball. After they were married, he kept that promise, working his way on to the Nebraska baseball team for the 2007 season.

Weber posted a 1-2 record, with a 5.55 earned-run average.

But now that he's settled into the Cornhusker program — and married life — it's time for him to step into a bigger role for the Nebraska baseball team.

Coming off a year of disappointing off-the-field events, the Huskers are craving a leader with good moral character. And Nebraska coach Mike Anderson said they have found it in Weber.

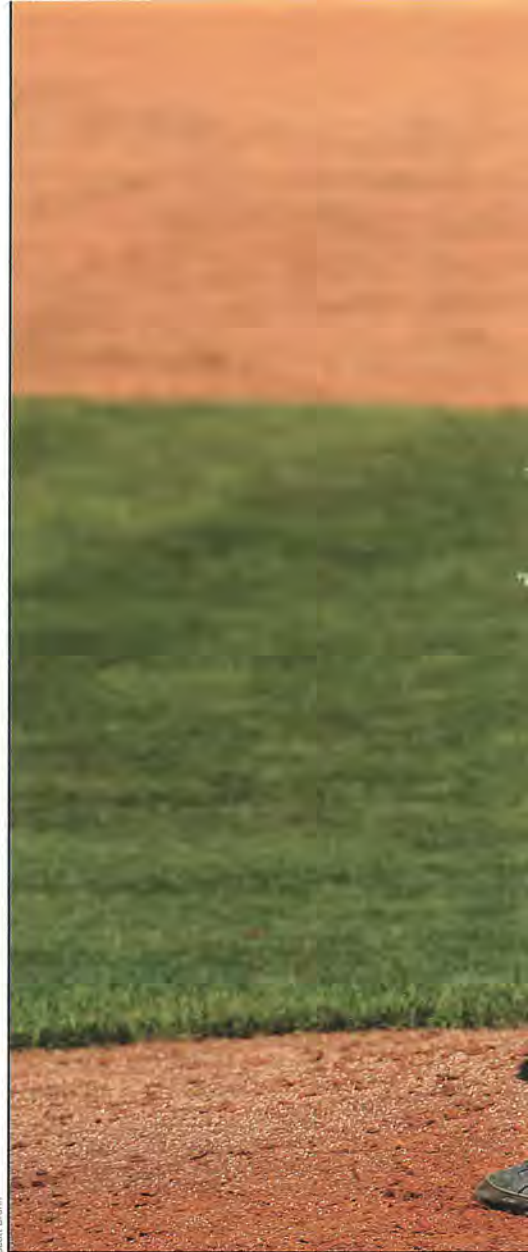
"I love it," Anderson said. "I'll take a mature young man like that any

time. I'm not going to say every one of our baseball players should be married, but I'll tell you this, it adds depth to the maturity and leadership of our team. Our kids respect that, they respect Thad, they respect his family. And what that does is it says, here's a college guy who is doing things in a different way."

A vocal leader for the squad, Weber said he feels a lot better entering this season since he has a year of experience at Nebraska. Coming into the program a year ago and being older, but not a veteran, meant he had to earn his spot, not only in terms of on the diamond but also in terms of on the team as well.

"Obviously when you're a new guy coming into a program, whether you're a freshman or from junior college, you're always going to be timid, a little shy about what you're doing," Weber said. "But this year there is a

Scott Bruhn





Thad Weber finished 1-2 with three saves in his first season with the Huskers, after transferring from Hutchinson (Kan.) Community College.

level of (comfort) I have that really makes it that much better to get after guys and really try and be a leader."

Weber's success during summer ball also helps with his leadership skills since it has prepared him for a much bigger role for Nebraska.

Thanks to the Beatrice Bruins Baseball team, Weber got starting success on the mound. He recorded a 7-0 record and a 0.78 ERA. His performance has led Anderson to consider him for weekend starting jobs in either the one, two or three spots.

Much of Weber's improvement comes from his attitude, Anderson said. He's a mentally competitive person and has come to understand his potential.

"I think this summer was just one more step in saying, 'I've got a chance to keep going,'" Anderson said. "So

this summer was a good chance for him to be a great starter. He did that role, and that's the way we look at him. He's a veteran pitcher for us that has a chance to be a starter."

With several opportunities ahead of him on the baseball field, Weber said he's excited for what this season could bring for the Huskers. Although the team is young, they could surprise people, he said.

And, besides, winning would make those hours away from Megan a little more bearable.

"The weekends are obviously nice because there is more free time, but only a couple of hours at night, so about seven or eight hours a week," Weber said of time with his wife. "So it's tough, but we try to do the best we can. Obviously the time we do have together is that much better." ■

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A Special Season

Matt Davison arrived at Nebraska in May of 1997, a day or two after high school graduation in Tecumseh, Neb., to begin preparing for his first football season. He didn't expect to play as a freshman. In fact, his goal was to play at some point during his career, even if only as a senior.

Though he was a scholarship recruit, he was pretty sure few of his new teammates, if any, knew much about him. He was "just a skinny little guy" from a small town, hoping to live a dream.

Ralph Brown and Mike Brown were sophomores who had played as true freshmen. Ralph had started from the opening game in 1996, in fact. Neither knew Davison from a load of hay. But he was there to play wide receiver he told them, and that was all they needed to know. Ralph gave him a pair of football shoes and immediately began working with him, covering pass routes. Mike did the same.

"Who better to make you better than those two guys?" Davison said recently. "They had no reason to believe Matt Davison was going to play any role at all on that (1997) team."

"But they started going through things. Everybody was out on the field, but I just remember Mike and Ralph really trying to help me along. They'd tell me when I ran a route, 'I was able to cover you because you did this; you tipped off your route.' It really helped me a lot. They were great."

By summer's end, Davison was getting help from the other wide receivers as well, among them Jeff Lake, Lance Brown, Billy Haafke and Kenny Cheatham. Coaches couldn't work with players during the summer, so the veterans had that responsibility. And they took it seriously.

"I couldn't believe how hard everybody worked," said Davison.

After winning national championships in 1994 and 1995, Nebraska had stumbled at Arizona State in 1996, losing 19-0 to snap a 26-game winning streak. Nevertheless, the Cornhuskers had battled back, climbed in the national rankings to No. 3 going into the first Big 12 championship game.

A victory against Texas would have put them in position to play for another national title. But they lost, 37-27, and had to settle for a 41-21 victory against Virginia Tech in the Orange Bowl.

That night in Miami, those who would return made a national championship resolution for 1997. "They really wanted another one," Davison said. "So the leadership (in

1997) was unmatched on any team I ever played for. They taught all the younger guys how to play and how to demand the most out of your teammates, hold everybody accountable, go out and get it done, no excuses."

Grant Wistrom and Jason Peter were prominent among those who would return, by choice. Both could have left following their junior seasons, by way of the NFL Draft.

Wistrom and Peter would be elected captains, along with Aaron Taylor and Vershan Jackson, in the fall of 1997. But they imposed their will on that team long before. And by the time the season began, the rules of conduct were clearly delineated: Commit yourself to winning or get out.

"Grant and Jason were unbelievable," said Davison, one of six true freshmen who played in 1997. "I knew if I didn't do my job, I was going to have to face those guys in the locker room."

And he was "more fearful" of facing them than facing his position coach, Ron Brown.

"I love Ron, but I wasn't necessarily scared of him," Davison said.

The 1997 team held a 10-year anniversary reunion on the weekend of the Oklahoma State game, with players and coaches being honored before kickoff.

The third national championship in four seasons was a fitting conclusion to Hall of Fame coach Tom Osborne's final season, though no one knew it would be that during the season.

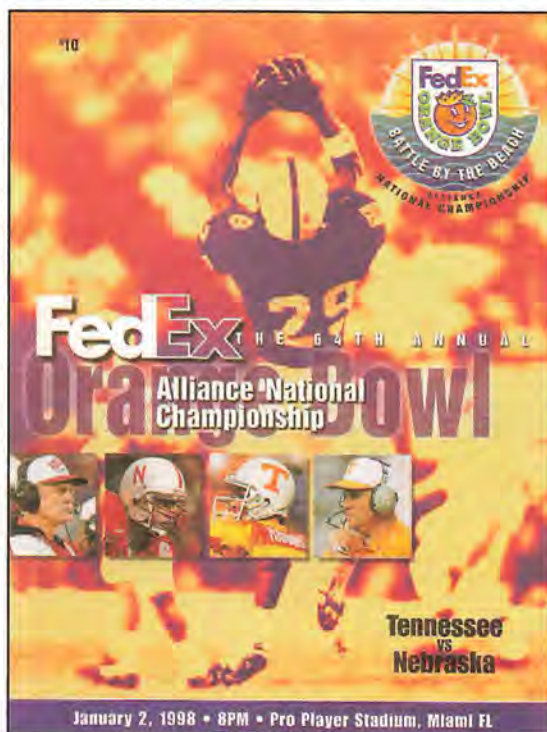
Osborne's retirement made the title bittersweet. "I never have talked to a player on that team who said, 'Oh boy, I saw that coming.' I don't think anybody did," said Davison. "That's just me. Maybe some guys will tell

you they thought so. But I don't know how they would have known."

The Cornhuskers completed their championship run with a 42-17 victory against Peyton Manning-led Tennessee in the Orange Bowl, then waited for the results of the coaches' poll in the early-morning hours.

"There are very few times in your life, if ever, that you get to say you're the best at something, so that's special, going through a season like that," Davison said. "It's a bond no one can take away from you. So 10 years, 20 years, 50 years, no matter how long it is, you'll always look back and you'll remember things about that season. It's just an unreal feeling, coming from a small community in this state. It was great. God, I wish I could go back and do it all over again."

No doubt, he spoke for everyone who returned for the reunion.



The 1997 Huskers completed their championship run with a 42-17 victory against Peyton Manning and Tennessee in the Jan. 2, 1998, Orange Bowl.

Quick Hits

ENSURING NO REPEAT

Christina Houghtelling made sure there was no repeat of the Nebraska volleyball team's loss at Colorado last season, recording a season-high 19 kills in leading No. 1-ranked Nebraska to a 30-25, 30-18, 30-20 victory over the Buffaloes on Oct. 6.

The Huskers, who won their 24th consecutive match dating to last season, relied on the senior outside-hitter from Cambridge, Neb. Houghtelling's 19 kills were a match high. Her hitting percentage was .410. She also had 11 digs and three blocks.

Nebraska needed a strong effort and leadership from Houghtelling after falling behind 17-9 before making a strong charge.

BEST IN A WHILE

The Husker volleyball team had a .500 hitting percentage in dispatching Baylor in late September, its best percentage since Oct. 10, 2001, when it hit .523 against Kansas. Those are the only times Nebraska has hit .500 or better in the rally-scoring era.

RECORD-TYING EFFORT

Coach John Cook's top-ranked team tied the school record for consecutive home victories in defeating Kansas State 30-16, 30-16, 30-25. The victory was the Huskers' 63rd in a row at home, the third-longest home winning streak in NCAA Division I volleyball history.

Kansas State came to the Coliseum ranked No. 17.

EARLY LINE

College basketball annuals began appearing on the newsstands a month ago. Athlon Sports predicts coach Doc Sadler's second Nebraska team will finish ninth in the Big 12 and play in the NIT. "Huskers will pull some upsets thanks to Doc Sadler's coaching," the magazine says.

Senior center Aleks Maric is picked to Athlon's All-Big 12 first team, along with forward Michael Beasley of Kansas State and guards D.J. Augustin of Texas and Sherron Collins and Brandon Rush of Kansas. The Jayhawks are picked to repeat as conference champions, followed by Texas.

"Sadler did a more-than-respectable job in his first season in Lincoln, coaxing 17 wins out of a team that was outmanned in the majority of its games," the magazine says.

COACHES AGREE

The Big 12 coaches also included Maric on their six-player preseason all-conference team, along with Augustin, Rush, Darrell Arthur of Kansas, Joseph Jones of Texas A&M and Curtis Jerrells of Baylor. The coaches also voted Augustin as the Big 12 preseason Player of the Year, Beasley as Freshman of the Year and Missouri's Demarre Carroll, a junior transfer from Vanderbilt, as Newcomer of the Year.

Maric, the leading returning scorer and rebounder in the Big 12, is the first Cornhusker to make the coaches' preseason all-conference team since Kimani Ffriend in 2000-01. The only other Cornhuskers to be selected to the team were Tyrone Lue (1997-98) and Venson Hamilton (1998-99). Maric averaged 18.5 points and 8.7 rebounds last season, 19.3 points and 9.4 rebounds in conference play.

INTRASQUAD MEET

The Husker swimming and diving team prepared for the



Jenny Toler

start of its season with the sixth annual intrasquad meet in early October. Junior Jenny Toler led the Scarlet to a 70-57 victory over the Cream. The Scarlet team won eight of 14 events. "With all due respect to other meets that we've had in the past, this has to be the top in terms of the competitiveness and spirit," coach Pablo Morales said.

Morales' team includes seniors Lynn Siemert and Adrienne Goodman, as well as 11 freshmen. The Huskers were scheduled to open their season with a home dual against Illinois on Oct. 12.

ROSTER: Seniors — Goodman (Ballwin, Mo.), Siemert (Sterling, Ill.); **Juniors** — Cassidy Bray (Omaha, Neb.), Courtney Jolly (Plantation, Fla.), Jenna Stroud (Lincoln, Neb.), Toler (Elk Grove Village, Ill.), Christina Yemm (Sterling, Ill.); **Sophomores** — Kaitlin Arntz (Omaha, Neb.), Sarah Broker (Downers Grove, Ill.), Colleen Criss (Omaha, Neb.), Hailey Dean (San Diego, Calif.), Mariah Hutchinson (Topeka, Kan.), Kelsey Ida (Highlands Ranch, Colo.) Sarah Ziegelmann (Fargo, N.D.); **Freshmen** — Jess Andrews (Gillette, Wyo.), Emily Burbach (Lincoln, Neb.), Mariesa Cloud (Maple Valley, Minn.), Claire Desormey (St. Charles, Ill.), Julie Giehl (Boulder, Colo.), Kelsey Grushecky (West Newton, Pa.), Blaine Hoppenrath (Liberty, Mo.), Brandie Kavalec (Loveland, Colo.), Audrey Kruse (Sioux Falls, S.D.), Meredith Matthies (Wichita, Kan.), Rachell McClain (Henderson, Nev.).

REMAINING SCHEDULE: Oct. 19 — Big 12 Relays at Ames, Iowa; **Oct. 20** — South Dakota State; **Nov. 2** — Nebraska-Omaha/Nevada; **Nov. 3** — Iowa/Nevada; **Nov. 9-11** — Minnesota Diving Invitational at Minneapolis, Minn.; **Nov. 15-18** — Husker Invitational; **Nov. 29-Dec. 1** — Texas Invitational at Austin, Texas; **Jan. 5** — Holiday Training Trip Competition at San Luis Potosi, Mexico; **Jan. 19** — Kansas at Lawrence, Kan.; **Feb. 2** — Iowa State; **Feb. 9** — Missouri at Columbia, Mo.; **Feb. 27-March 1** — Big 12 Championships at Austin, Texas; **March 14-16** — NCAA Zone Diving Championships, TBA; **March 20-22** — NCAA Championships at Columbus, Ohio.

FALL SEASON ENDS

Coach Rhonda Revelle's Husker softball team finished its fall season with an 8-1 record, outscoring opponents 37-8. Sophomore right-hander Alex Hupp was 5-0 with four shutouts, striking out 36 and allowing just 21 hits in 30 innings. She allowed only one run, in the fall final against Pittsburg State, after 28.2 consecutive scoreless innings. The run scored on a hit batter, a stolen base and a bloop single.

Because of injuries, "a lot of freshmen got to play and it was good for them to get that experience," said Revelle. "Every weekend we got better, and that was great to see."

"We got great pitching, and I was very pleased with how they worked."

Junior right-hander Molly Hill, who began the fall with 14.1 consecutive scoreless innings, was the other healthy pitcher. Freshman right-hander Tori Tyson was sidelined by injury.

The Huskers are scheduled to open the season at the Kajikawa Classic at Tempe, Ariz., Feb. 15-17.

IT'S ACADEMIC

Six Nebraska athletic teams earned perfect Graduation Success Rate (GSR) scores released by the NCAA in early October: volleyball, women's basketball, women's golf, women's gymnastics, women's tennis and rifle. Seven other Cornhusker teams earned scores of 75 percent or better, including the football team at 83 percent. The average for Bowl Subdivision teams was 67 percent.

The football team's GSR was second in the Big 12 to Baylor.

GSR scores are based on four classes of scholarship student-athletes who entered school from the fall of 1997 to the fall of 2000. They allow a six-year window in which degrees can be earned. ■



Aleks Maric

CROSSWORD

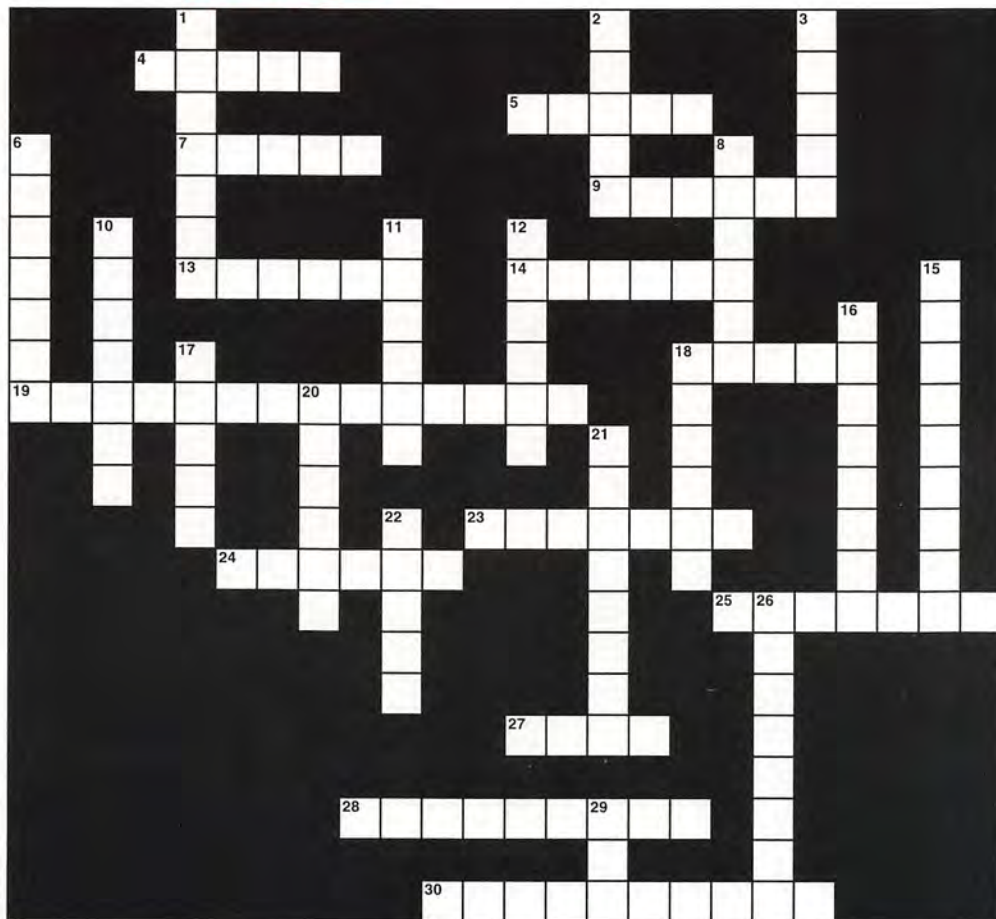
ACROSS

- 4 Wears No. 77
- 5 Special teams coordinator
- 7 Oct. 27 opponent
- 9 Kicked 2 field goals vs. Missouri
- 13 Wears No. 76
- 14 Texas A&M nickname
- 18 Texas A&M athletic director
- 19 Texas A&M campus location
- 23 Linebacker from Oklahoma
- 24 Long-snapper
- 25 Associate AD for football
- 27 Volleyball coach
- 28 Wears No. 46
- 30 Texas A&M head coach

DOWN

- 1 1997 All-America rush end
- 2 Holder for place-kicks
- 3 Leading receiver vs. Missouri
- 6 Kickoff specialist
- 8 Buffalo Bills' defensive end
- 10 Tight ends coach
- 11 Nov. 3 opponent
- 12 Texas A&M color
- 15 Head coach in 1951
- 16 Head coach in 1961
- 17 1997 All-America defensive tackle
- 18 Offensive captain
- 20 Basketball coach
- 21 Thomas Lawson's home state
- 22 Kicked 5 field goals for Houston Texans on Oct. 7
- 26 Baseball coach
- 29 Network for NU-Colorado telecast

Answers in Oct. 27 issue



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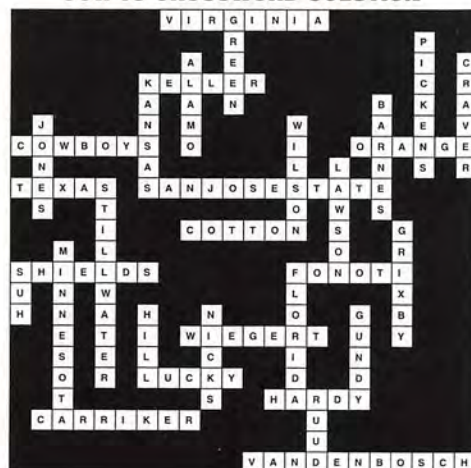
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OCT. 13 CROSSWORD SOLUTION



10 YEARS AGO . . .

Huskers Illustrated looks back at some of the top stories of 1997

**Nov. 1, 1997:
Volume 17, No. 14**

1997 WOMEN'S BASKETBALL PREVIEW

Can first year coach Paul Sanderford build on the momentum from last season?

NATIVE SON

Oklahoman Josh Heskeew takes what will probably be his last shot at the school that spurned him coming out of high school.

SIDE OUT: BAPTIZED BY FIRE

Allison Weston is adjusting to a position change (right-side hitter) and a new life with Team USA.

NU WEATHERS KANSAS STORM IN 'UGLY' 35-0 WIN

Nebraska's 35-0 victory against Kansas can be remembered as the night the lights went out in Lawrence.

Except for that, there wasn't much else to distinguish it from any other Nebraska-Kansas football game.

The victory was Nebraska's 29th in a row against the Jayhawks, and the outcome was never really in doubt.

The lights didn't go out completely. But two of the four banks of lights at Memorial Stadium shut down with 9:36 remaining in the first half.

The game was delayed for seven minutes while coaches Tom Osborne and Terry Allen conferred with officials. "They



wanted to delay the game," said Osborne. "I wanted to keep playing."

Kansas ran one play, on which quarterback Zac Wegner was sacked for a 10-yard loss by Jason Peter, punted, and the coaches conferred again. Nebraska's Joe Walker mis-handled the punt, and Allen wanted to make certain Osborne hadn't changed his mind about playing before the lights came back on.

"He really was nice about it. He wasn't trying to get an advantage. I think he was genuinely concerned," Osborne said. "But we just fumbled the punt because we fumbled the punt."

So play continued. By the time Cornhusker quarterback Scott Frost ran for 3 yards on a third-down play, the lights had begun returning, bulb by bulb. And by third down of

Kansas' next possession, all the lights were back.

What wasn't back, however, was the offensive edge that had enabled Nebraska to build a 21-0 lead less than five minutes into the second quarter. The Cornhuskers managed just over 30 yards of offense and one first down from then until the fourth quarter.

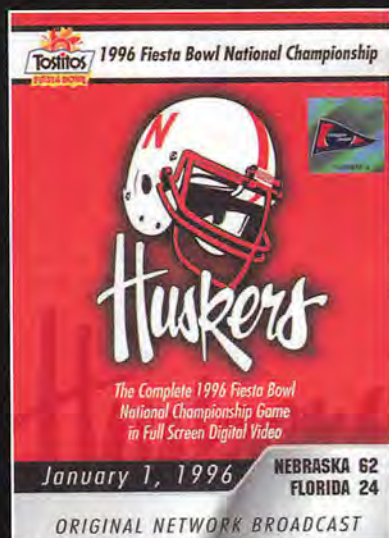
"Offensively, we were a little disappointed in the way we played," said fullback Joel Makovicka, who ran for 82 yards and two touchdowns.

"We were kind of flat in the third quarter. We're lucky tonight that we had such a great defense."

Nebraska's defense limited Kansas to 48 total yards on 48 plays in posting its second consecutive shutout. Based on available records, the total was the lowest in Jayhawk history.

Kansas had not been shut out in 52 consecutive games, dating to a 42-0 loss against Florida State in the 1993 Kickoff Classic. The Jayhawks had not been shut out at home . . . ■

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Plenty Of Questions

'We've got to go back and fix it to the best of our ability . . .'



Mike BABCOCK

ONCE AGAIN, reporters pulled out media guides to search records. This time their search was two-fold. What was the worst-ever first half at home? And what was the worst-ever loss at home?

Turns out the 38-0 deficit at the intermission was the worst. But the 45-14 loss, well, Nebraska has suffered worse at Memorial Stadium, though not since Bob Devaney arrived in 1962.

The Cornhuskers lost to Missouri 31-0 at Memorial Stadium in 1958, also a Homecoming game. But their worst home loss since then was 38-9 against Kansas State in 2003 — for what that's worth.

No one really needs history to provide a context for Nebraska's 45-14 loss against Oklahoma State. Fans were streaming from the stands long before the end. That's context enough.

The fans came prepared, enthusiastic and ready to provide what energy they could.

But the team, well, it trailed 17-0 just over 11 minutes into the game.

"First off, this is ultimately disappointing for our football team today," coach Bill Callahan said afterward. "I really felt coming into this contest we were going to play more competitively."

A couple of sentences in he asked for water to clear his throat.

"There's not really much to say. We're just disappointed right now," he said.

All the team could do was move on and prepare for Texas A&M.

After the brief introductory remarks, Callahan took questions, which came rapid-fire. The first set the tone: *Was he on the "hot-seat" and would he now be coaching to salvage his job?*

"I'm not worried about that," he said. "I'm just coaching for these kids. That's why I got into this, to help these kids. I just feel terrible for these players. It just hurts to watch these kids hurt."

"I'm just going to do the best I can, and whatever happens, happens. I don't think you can coach in fear or coach like you're scared of something. I've never coached like that in my life. I've been in this business for 30 years, and I sure as hell ain't going to start right now, that's for sure."

He was matter of fact, certainly not defiant.

Does he think he has lost this team?

"I don't think so," he said. "I thought the way they came back in the second half was pretty indicative of their efforts. I thought that they came back and competed. I thought we ran the ball better."

"We were getting a rhythm there in the second half."

Nebraska outscored Oklahoma State 14-7 in the second

half. Hey, it was something.

Does he think he can fix the problems?

"There's always hope," he said. "It starts again tomorrow and goes through the week in our preparation for A&M because nobody's going to feel sorry for us. We've got to go back and fix it to the best of our ability and go back on the field and compete next Saturday against A&M."

The Aggies lost at Texas Tech the same day, and have issues of their own.

Does this team lack the ability to respond to adversity?

"I think we have tough kids. To strap it on and play in this game, you've got to be tough," he said. "Anybody that buckles their chinstrap on and goes on that field is a tough, tough individual."

"It's a hard game, a tough game, and it's our responsibility to prepare them to the best of our ability to go out and perform. And that hasn't quite happened. That's the disappointment we have as a staff."

Would he consider making staff changes during the season?

"No, no I would not," he said. "No, I would not."

There were other questions, about 15 minutes' worth in all. And like these, they were tough questions, the sort of questions a coach can expect when reporters begin searching through records.

The coaches did everything they possibly could to prepare the team for Oklahoma State, Callahan said. And they would continue to do so

because "a part of life is believing."

"You've got to believe. You just have to believe that, as a coach, in coaching young men, keep hope alive for those kids. You can't walk away from them and point fingers and blame, do anything like that. We're all in it together. They understand that. They're hurt, more than anybody."

"They're embarrassed. They really hurt. Those kids in that room I just left, they're gutted. They are, seriously, mentally, emotionally, physically . . . they're gutted. They were sick."

The coaches "want the best for them. It's not like we're not trying to have the best for them, give them the best plan, the best preparation," said Callahan. "It's just . . . things happen."

"And that's our responsibility to make sure it doesn't happen again."

Oklahoma State 45, Nebraska 14.

Questions upon questions, difficult to answer, if they could be answered at all. ■



Bill Callahan is now 26-18 in his four seasons at Nebraska.

Mike Babcock is a former sports columnist for the Lincoln Journal Star. He has covered Nebraska football for nearly 30 years. Mike can be reached at MBABCOCK1@neb.rr.com or P.O. Box 6782, Lincoln, NE 68506.



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